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[THE SEXTON'S VISITOR.]

## MISS ARLINGCOURT'S WILL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"*Leaves of Fate*," "*Octavia's Pride*," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER V.

A WILD shriek piercing through the house with its shrill cry of horror and terror, and its undertone of passionate grief, startled every sleeper in the west wing at Arlingcourt Rise, while yet the morning's gray hung over the scene. And in a moment longer, the group, gathered instantaneously in the great corridor, saw Belinda rush out of Miss Arlingcourt's chamber with a face like a dead person's, only for its terrible agony, wringing her hands wildly.

"Oh, go for a doctor! go for a doctor, hasten all of you! Miss Arlingcourt is ill. She does not speak,—she does not move,—she is as cold as ice!"

The housekeeper rushed past her into the chamber, and all the female servants followed. Barbara West coming from her door, still fastening the pearl buttons of her wrapper, saw Mr. Raleigh coming out with a face full of surprise and excitement. She went by him without a word or a look, and entered upon that impressive scene. There was the terrified group of weeping women, and there was the pallid, rigid, stierless figure extended on the couch. Barbara West shut her eyes a moment before she was able to turn them upon the face. But when she saw it, somehow it lessened the shock to find it touchingly beautiful, with a peaceful smile.

"Oh, Cornelia," she cried, flinging herself on her knees before the bed, "you have found rest at last." Reynold Raleigh had come back to watch Miss West, but she would not turn her countenance to his scrutiny, but kept it buried in her hands.

Once she caught poor old Belinda's hand, and wrung it fiercely.

"Oh, Belinda, do you think it was anything in that phial? I shall never forgive myself that I did not snatch it out of her hand."

"Heaven only knows. Oh, my lamb,—my beau-

tiful mistress! Oh, the last Arlingcourt!" moaned Belinda.

But during the excitement and confusion came the physicians summoned by zealous servants from either village, and before their grave faces the lamenting crowd opened and dispersed.

Barbara West, however, still with her face hidden, kept her place.

"Dead! she has complained of her heart this past year," said the physician who had hitherto attended the late mistress of Arlingcourt Rise. "But I had no idea it would be so sudden as this."

And then in grave and learned terms the pair conversed about the case.

Dead! Cornelia Arlingcourt dead! There were sorrowful mourning hearts which felt intensely this sudden dispensation, with many a pang of personal grief, for she had been a kind and faithful mistress to them all.

Belinda was crouching on the floor at the back of the bed rocking herself to and fro. Presently Miss West came forward with a pale distressed face.

"I wish to state to you, gentlemen, what took place last night. Our dear, dear friend was ill, wretchedly ill all day, and we ought to have sent for medical advice. She insisted upon taking some medicine from a phial of mine, although I was very unwilling, because I knew nothing about it. Belinda here heard me remonstrate. Will you be so good as to examine it, and tell me if you think it possible the medicine could have been injurious."

She held out a tiny phial, one of the golden-tipped phials of the Indian casket, but not the central one which held the sapphire glimmer.

The learned men took it, tasted it carefully, and each pronounced it a mild opiate, which could not possibly have been the cause of the lady's death.

Miss West drew one long sigh of relief.

"Oh, it is such a relief to my mind! I was so afraid it might have been caused by that!"

Reynold Raleigh stood in the doorway with the gravity on his face becoming the mournful occasion.

"Be sure, oh, be sure, you use every test to make

certain your help cannot bring her back to us," he said.

And in a moment more he walked away. Miss West slowly followed. At the foot of the stairs the pair confronted each other.

"She knew the whole, Reynold. Miss Arlingcourt knew just what had been done out there in Italy. The whole plot was revealed to her," spoke Miss West, in a low, hasty voice.

"You are a brave little woman, Barbara."

She shivered and turned away; then asked almost fiercely:

"How soon shall we be married?"

"Let us have the funeral first, Barbara."

"Yes, I suppose so. Did you see that smile on her face? She has not looked so happy since—since she was a girl out there in Florence."

Reynold Raleigh shrugged his shoulders.

"After the funeral, the will," he muttered.

Which assertion, events verified.

Miss Arlingcourt, still looking like a beautiful marble statue, with that rapturous smile on her face, was carried out from the great house of her fathers; she, the last of her race, was borne tenderly and reverently, to the Arlingcourt vault, under Blackwater Church, and left there, with the great velvet pall which swept over the mouldering coffin of her father, dropping its sable fringe on the fresh glass of the casket which contained that, which but so brief a time before had lived and suffered, had hoped and feared, with all the Arlingcourt fervour of passion. She had found rest, as Barbara West kept saying over and over again to herself, with a wild persistence which frightened her, because it somehow seemed that some invisible thing was keeping at her side, and whispering an accusing sentence which she felt herself compelled to reply to.

The nearer circle of acquaintances and friends returned to the mansion, understanding that the will was to be read then and there, and keenly curious, as, indeed, was natural, about the disposition of this large and ancient estate.

Noel Calderwood and his daughter, of course, were present. The former had attempted to occupy

the first place in the funeral procession, but receiving a frown from Mr. Reynold Raleigh, had concluded discretion was the better part of valour in this case, and therefore slipped back in the rear of the home party.

The little nervous apothecary could hardly control himself enough to make a respectable appearance. He was in a fierce perspiration, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. What wild fears, and still more daring hopes, danced through his mind! He had extorted from his daughter a full description of her conversation with Miss Arlingcourt, and he felt sure it had a meaning. Only one thing alarmed him. Had there been time for her to execute the change he was so positive she intended? The confident air of Mr. Raleigh disconcerted him terribly. He kept his restless eyes darting from the grave sedate countenance of the latter gentleman to the lawyers, though he might have learned as much from the blank walls as from their sphinx faces trained to keep secrets securely. But at length the announcement was made that all interested might take place in the library to hear the will of the last Arlingcourt.

Of course Mr. Reynold Raleigh led the way with a decorous gravity on his face, but no uneasiness. Miss West, with her bonnet on, and its crape veil falling over her face, came after, and singly and in pairs other people followed. Noel Calderwood had his conspicuously white handkerchief in his hand, using it continually one way or another, and his pretty daughter, looking shy and frightened, and somehow a little ashamed, clung to his arm, and dropped hastily into the first seat offered her, and never lifted her eyes from the floor until the whole ceremony was ended.

Not that sweet little Lucy, who had a soul keen and sensitive to all beautiful objects, was oblivious to the momentous issue which might lift her to those golden scenes of which she had lately caught such charming glimpses, or send her back to her poor narrow and stunted home, hopeless of any change. But her thoughts were full of awed sorrow for this grand and beautiful lady, the sole owner of such a paradise, who had been so suddenly stricken down. But lately so kind and gracious, and full of life—to-day, cold and silent in that dreary tomb. You see she was so young she could not pass lightly over this yawning grave, even though the step brought her to a rich inheritance. And most of all, with a child's wondering awe, she was thinking what it must be to lie down upon a couch, and never, never waken again to this world; vaguely questioning also, with more than a child's yearning, what the waking on the other side the dark river would be.

And so Lucy heard dully the preliminary words of the lawyer, and was in no wise conscious of her father's start of joyful surprise, nor of the sudden rush of sullen red, the heart-tide started out of his control, which darkened Reynold Raleigh's face, nor still less the deadly pallor which whitened Barbara West to her very lips, at the simple date of this formal-looking document, the last will and testament of the last Arlingcourt of Arlingcourt Rise. It was executed only the day previous to her death.

What need to repeat the tedious formality required to make such an instrument valid?

It covered four pages closely written, and the lawyer's coldly-measured voice read it with due deliberation, but during the long pause following his closing words everyone but Lucy had seized upon and comprehended his meaning. Arlingcourt Rise was left under the control of two respectable men of the county for the use of two people, the heirs she had chosen, in case those two fulfilled the conditions imposed. Mr. Reynold Raleigh and Miss Lucy Calderwood were the fortunate recipients of this bounty.

The former, despite his desperate efforts to seem composed, fairly gasped for breath when his name was announced, and his heart gave a relieving bound as if some iron hand had unclasped its clutch. The latter just fluttered her white eyelids upward, and finding her father's face contented, if not satisfied, dropped them again.

But the conditions. Well, they did not seem much to Reynold Raleigh, still less to Noel Calderwood, or dear little Lucy herself. Only this: neither the said Reynold Raleigh, nor the aforesaid Lucy Calderwood could marry, or be already married, without forfeiting every farthing of their inheritance, nor either of them live a year away from Arlingcourt.

This much—nothing more. There was a list of generous bequests to the faithful servants, and among these was the phrase significant only to one pair of stunned ears:

"And I do hereby request and provide that one Barbara West, shall be allowed the privilege of a room and board at Arlingcourt Rise; that when it is her pleasure, she may enjoy the society and friendship of the heirs I have chosen. I give her this privilege, and thus ensure that happiness I

am confident she will find, in recompense for the timely discovery of the sincerity of her friendship, the proofs of which she keeps in an Indian casket in her private drawer."

Barbara West heard, and was thankful for the screening veil which hid from the company her livid countenance. "That happiness she will find!" Did she not understand, feel to the very quick, what was meant by those ambiguous words? Her brain reeled, her veins seemed athrob with currents of fire. This—this was her reward.

Reynold Raleigh bound by his dearest interests, his love of ease, luxury and power, to deny her the price for which she had worked such foul deeds of treachery and fraud. Reynold Raleigh fixed for life under the same roof with this fair young girl, who had already attracted his admiring eye, and she Barbara West, a faded, disappointed, poverty-stricken woman, given the privilege of lodging and board, that she might look on and watch the growing attachment, which would absorb his passionate nature.

Barbara West was right when she said she had quicker intuitions than most people, and understood above all Cornelia Arlingcourt's mind. She comprehended instantaneously the subtle refinement of the dead woman's revenge, which could work its will even from the mouldering tomb. In the midst of it all, it came upon her like a flash of lightning, the look on Cornelia Arlingcourt's face, when she poured out the tiny drops from the sapphire liquid. Her teeth chattered as she said to herself:

"She knew it was fatal, when she drank that horrible potion! She was willing to die, to work out this revenge! Oh, it is she who has triumphed, and I am miserably defeated!"

And while yet the lawyer was reading the farther provisions for the disposal of the estate, giving to the one keeping single the whole property, in case the other married, and bequeathing the estate to a public charity if both refused to fulfil the condition, Miss West rose up slowly, and crept away out of the room.

Reynold Raleigh saw it, and a cold, contemptuous smile crossed his lips.

"Upon my word, I don't think Miss Arlingcourt could have devised more agreeably," thought he. "She has effectually rid me of that troublesome creature. It will be quite an agreeable change to see this lovely young Lucy in the old parlours."

#### CHAPTER VI.

PELEG MOSS, the sexton of Blackwater Church, a queer old graybeard, but a genius in his humble way, sat on the old bench at his cottage door on that very evening after the funeral from the great house, solacing his rather dreary reflections with his beloved pipe.

In doors, old Martha, a cousin who took satisfactory care of the humble domicile, was setting the last things to rights before departing according to her custom, "just an hour after the hens," to her bed.

Peleg listened dreamily to her crooning voice as she went rummaging about in the pantry, putting down the tins in an energetic fashion of her own, and he heard her dreary sigh as she fastened the hasp of the side door, and muttered:

"Elpsie is dreadfully cut up by this death, and no wonder. It be true that the ways of Providence are past finding out. Who'd have thought old Peleg would have lived to put away in the family vault the last Arlingcourt; and she a woman in her prime? And not a happy woman either, that is the mystery of it."

And Peleg sighed as lugubriously as Elpsie had done, and then fell to puffing away, blowing off the curling wreaths, and fancying in the smoker's absurd fashion, that somehow he was waiting away care and trouble also.

Elpsie closed the door and the windows and went to bed. Peleg heard her shuffling up the stairs, and saw the feeble glow of her candle go out in darkness. But he sat on, even after he had exhausted his pipe, staring out into the dimness, vaguely impressed, as happens to us all sometimes, that he was wanted for something.

So when he saw a dim figure coming up the path towards the house, he was alert on his feet and went down to meet it.

"Are you the sexton of the church yonder? Peleg Moss, I think is the name."

"Yes, sir, that's me. And what may be wanted, sir?"

"I—I should like to talk with you a few moments. I have a favour to ask," returned the deep, melancholy voice.

"I don't know you, sir," said Peleg. "Will you sit down on the bench here with me? It is pleasanter to my thinking than in the house."

The stranger took the proffered seat.

Peleg was able to make out in the dimness that he was a tall, military looking gentleman, with a foreign sort of cloak wrapped around him. He waited a little, expecting him to make known his errand, but the gentleman appeared to be buried in a profound reverie.

"You wanted something of me," suggested Peleg when he was tired of waiting.

"Yes, I want you to unlock the Arlingcourt vault."

"The Arlingcourt vault," stammered Peleg, "don't you know it is a private tomb?"

"Yes, but you have the keys and can admit me. What harm can come of it? You may stay with me if you choose. I wish simply to take a farewell look at the face of the lady who was buried there to-day. Here is gold for your trouble."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Peleg, indignantly. "A stranger in this town certainly, or you would know that old Peleg Moss is not to be bribed from his trust. The Arlingcourt dignity and honour are dearer to me than any gain of my own."

The stranger gave a low, bitter laugh.

"Perhaps the surest way to preserve both will be to conciliate me. Nevertheless you are right. I will neither threaten nor bribe. I appeal simply to your compassion. I knew Miss Arlingcourt. I loved her, and"—his voice thrilled with tender sorrow as he spoke the words—"she loved me—she certainly loved me once. But estrangement—cruel trouble came between us. With a clue to the source of the mischief, I have come from foreign lands, through innumerable perils, to see her. I arrived in the town this morning, and I find her there in the vault. Man, man, I must, I will look upon her face once more, even though I find it there in her coffin."

"Good heavens! good heavens!" ejaculated Peleg.

"You believe me. I know you cannot help it. Think a moment, and see if your own knowledge of Cornelia Arlingcourt does not confirm my story. Was she a happy woman, or did she have the look and air of one who carries about a secret sorrow. Oh, if she had only lived long enough to have listened to my story!—if she had only hunted down the poisoner of her life."

"I don't know what you mean," said Peleg, in a perturbed voice. "If you please, sir, I am going for the lantern, and when I have seen your face I will tell you what I can do."

"Go, you will bring the keys also, if they are not with you now. You will take me to the tomb. I do not question a moment about your decision," answered the stranger.

Peleg was gone a little longer than was necessary, but he came back with the lighted lantern in his hand. If the stranger suspected the presence of the rusty horse-pistols in the old sexton's coat-pocket, he only smiled carelessly; but he was grave and calm when the lantern was lifted to illumine his face, and Peleg's searching eye went carefully over every feature.

It was a fine face, with heavy marks left by care and sorrow, but speaking eloquently of a soul refined from the dross of evil—an honest face. And something there assured Peleg Moss that the honourable character of its possessor could not be impeached.

A dim conviction that grief for such a man's lost affection had carried his beloved mistress down to her untimely grave came across him.

"You may go and see her, sir," said he; "and would to heaven you were not to find her cold and silent. I mistrust if only you had come before, there might have been happier days at Arlingcourt Rise."

A bitter sigh was the stranger's answer.

"Come," said he, impatiently, "let us go at once."

Peleg thrust the lantern under his coat, and led the way down the path along the rustic sidewalk to the gateway, which was secured by a stout padlock. A turn of the key in the bunch he had brought made their way clear, and they passed on around the silent, ivy hung walls of the church, descending two flights of stone steps, and stood at last at the solid iron doors leading to the burial vaults beneath.

At other times, used as he was to the damp mouldering atmosphere, Peleg would have shivered at the black shadows which hung their sable palls before him. But his thoughts were not so much with the corpse so lately brought hither in its costly casket, as with the living mistress, whose secret trouble was now revealed to him. A wistful compassion for the stranger likewise filled his heart.

He lowered the lantern once more to show him the steps, and stood in respectful silence while the gentleman passed in. Peleg closed the door carefully, lest any passer-by should detect the unwonted glimmer of light, then raised the wick of the lamp, and set it down on a stone seat close beside Miss Arlingcourt's coffin.



The stranger's face was deadly pale, and showed the mental agony which wrung out the heavy drops of moisture beading his forehead. He dropped down upon his knees beside the coffin, while Peleg wiping the suspicious dew from his own eyes took out his screw-driver, and began removing the silver heads from the lid.

"Cornelia! oh my poor Cornelia!" sighed the stranger. "Inscrutable indeed are the ways of heaven! If only you could have smiled once more upon me in renewed love and trust, I think I could have better borne to give you up for ever!"

Peleg with tender reverential hands took off the coffin lid, and set it against the side of the glistening stones.

"She looks like an angel, sir," he ventured, his voice wavering with emotion. "It will do you good to look. It's many a day since we've seen so much peace on her face!"

The agitated stranger rose slowly, and cast his eyes down towards the head resting on its white velvet pillow, as if afraid to see something which should disturb his memory of a gentle girlish face.

But the moment he saw plainly, he burst forth into a wild flood of tears, murmuring broken ejaculations of passionate endearment, flung his arms across the coffin, and laid his lips to hers.

"Cornelia! my Cornelia! this world is not all! We shall be re-united where there are no doubts or treacheries. Oh, my beautiful Cornelia! Death has given you back to my embrace!"

Peleg Moss hurried out to the door, his love for Miss Arlingcourt giving him the delicacy of sympathy which culture had not bestowed.

"Poor soul! poor soul!" he muttered, "I shall not stay by to disturb him. He shall have his dead to himself—whatever it was which came between them while living."

Half an hour, three quarters, a whole hour passed, and the sexton began to find the waiting dreary; yet he could not determine in his heart to disturb the stranger's grief.

"I'll just walk out into the air and that will rouse me a little," he murmured, and suiting the action to the word, unclosed the door softly, and went up into the clear outer air, and made the circuit of the church half-a-dozen times. By that time his mind was keen and awake. Something out in the churchyard, flitting along by the stile, drew his attention, and he followed it only to find one of his own tame rabbits who had strayed thither probably before dark and lost itself. With the little creature under his arm he went back to the door of the vault. The stranger stood there evidently looking for him.

"I put back the lid and screwed it down myself," said he. "It was very kind of you to come, and if I offer you gold, it is not that I believe it rewards you according to your deserts."

"No, sir, I don't want pay. It is for Miss Arlingcourt's sake," answered Peleg, locking the door, and then suddenly he paused.

"But you had on a cloak, sir; you've left it." "No, I threw it down out there when I went to look for you," said the other, hastily. "Let us hasten away before anyone comes. I will not trouble you any farther."

At the gateway the stranger paused. "I think it would do me good to walk a while in the churchyard. Is there any other exit?"

"Certainly, I will unlock the inner gate for you, and you can go out on the other side."

"Thank you. Good-night." "Good-night, sir."

The stranger waited until the sexton disappeared, then he turned, ran swiftly back, and took up in his arms a long slender burden lying wrapped closely in his cloak, under the drooping veil of ivy hanging from the church porch.

He staggered under his burden, but he persisted and carried it safely across the churchyard along the highway, and took it in with him into a house not far distant, to which his key admitted him. Before daybreak, a close carriage, with pawing, impatient horses stood there, and receiving its passengers, whether one or more could not be seen from the outside, as the world was wrapped in that thickest darkness which presages the approach of morning, and the equipage dashed away at a furious pace.

Peleg Moss had unquiet dreams that night, and the next morning nothing would satisfy him, but to go down again into the Arlingcourt vault, and make sure that all things had been left correctly. The cloak of the stranger still haunted him. Why hadn't he taken it before he came away to the gateway? He looked carefully over the floor of the vault, but there was no sign of it. The coffin lid was also well replaced; but it seemed to him the whole was moved a little off from the supports. He put his shoulder to it to push it back, but in a moment started up and seized the screwdriver, the cold drops of perspiration breaking out on his face.

A few moments' work satisfied him of the terrible correctness of his suspicions. He pulled off the lid and looked in. The coffin was empty!

Peleg, thinking only of his honourable sexton reputation, flung himself wildly down upon the pavement of the vault.

"What shall I do! oh, what shall I do!" he cried, and wrung his hands.

But his terror and indignation were of little avail. He found no trace of the stranger in the town, and the only alternative that seemed left to him, was to bury the secret of the rifled coffin in his own unhappy breast.

#### CHAPTER VII.

A YEAR passed very swiftly over Arlingcourt Rise, and with a gaiety which might well baffle the staid old servants, who had become trained to Cornelia Arlingcourt's quiet reign.

The two gentlemen, left by the will of the late mistress in charge of the vast estate, held really the reins of government, with regard to the collection of the rents and income; but the receipts were promptly divided, and handed over in equal portions,—after defraying the house expenses—to Reynold Raleigh and little Lucy Calderwood. Not that, at first, her share remained long in Lucy's purse. Noel Calderwood took good care of that. The crafty apothecary worked industriously to secure the advantages of his daughter's good fortune to his own account. The humble apothecary's shop was promptly closed, and "Noel Calderwood," in brilliant gold letters over the door of a fine new shop, announced that the gentleman had soared into the wholesale drug business; and it was as good as a bond, when he was purchasing an extra amount of stock, for him to say, after a fashion he was not slow to adopt:

"Ahem—if you have any doubt about my responsibility, there is my daughter, Miss Calderwood of Arlingcourt Rise—I presume her note would be of some account. She will make me advances any time, if it be necessary."

Upon which, of course, the dealer would open his eyes, and straightway assumed a more respectful manner.

"Of Arlingcourt Rise, sir? I was not aware you were connected there. Certainly, certainly; you can have all the credit you like."

Lucy had been reared in a sort of serfdom, a motherless child, frightened and trembling under her father's frown; and it was only a marvel that such cramping discipline had not quite ruined her disposition and character. Her natural sweetness had thus far sustained her, and the emancipation into a fairer and more genial atmosphere, came at the very season required by dawning womanhood's wider requirements.

Noel Calderwood, necessarily absent from her a great portion of the time, began to be aware of a gradual change in his daughter. This new experience was not without effect; Lucy was losing her timidity, and with it some of that blind compliance which Mr. Calderwood termed filial duty. She did not start, and blush, and tremble now, even if he raised his voice, or frowned angrily. She ventured to have opinions of her own, to act even without consulting his wishes, and finally, to his astonishment and alarm, she ventured one day to decline passing over to him her thirds of the income just paid into her hands.

"I think, father, it is hardly proper. It is intended for my use, and I am expected to keep up the position as Miss Arlingcourt's successor. There are a great many things I need, which I do not feel right in taking from any other source than this income. I want the best French teacher, for instance, and that new Italian master in music, and a set of jewels. Not that I care for the latter, but it is expected of me. You took such a lion's share the last quarter that I was seriously cramped. I do not mean that I am not always ready to help you, but you certainly ought to know it is not your right to take my income away," she said, steady her voice, and affecting a calmness she did not feel, for it was really an heroic effort, to which she had forced herself after a great deal of self-discipline.

Noel Calderwood was so thoroughly astonished as to be dumb, and Lucy got away without the angry reprimand she had schooled herself to bear. After this first breaking of the ice she found it easier; and at the end of the year one would hardly have recognized in the graceful dignified lady of Arlingcourt Rise, the timid little maiden who had blushed and trembled at every word or look addressed to her. Noel Calderwood, however he resented the change, was still proud of it.

Reynold Raleigh watched the unfolding of this sweet maidenly grace with something more than pride. Miss Arlingcourt had not erred in her prophetic vision. This *bliss* man of the world, who

had toyed and sported hitherto as, as his idle fancy dictated, with the foolish hearts of fair women, was himself caught in the toils at last. It was a new experience to be in daily contact with this innocent girl, who was brightening and beautifying under the gracious smiles of fortune, and growing swiftly to a knowledge of her own value and consequence.

Reynold Raleigh, who from the first had been captivated by her girlish prettiness, began to be passionately, absorbingly in love with Lucy Calderwood; that kind of love which seizes upon the whole life, and stands back for no other emotion.

Did Lucy know it? He could not say himself; he asked the question feverishly again and again, and blessed the good fortune which removed from him the fear of seeing some fortunate rival bear her away from his idolatrous gaze. He kept the house gay with young company, and showed himself to her constantly in his most agreeable light; that of a courteous and genial host. In one sense, this new passion was a saving one. It kept him from indulging his natural tendency to dissipation. Although he could be merry and gay as the wildest of his gentleman friends, he kept a watchful guard over himself, that Lucy should never see him imbruted by strong drink, nor fevered by a gambler's exhausting nights over the chances of the gaming-table. Possibly, there was a still more solid good, underlying these lighter benefits. No man, however bad and demoralized himself, can love a good, pure-hearted woman without being better for it. Be it ever so vague, a hatred for the evil in his heart, which must be hidden from her innocent eyes, grows into being. Yearnings after the pure delights, which make her life like a sabbath in his eyes, overpower him the moment he lets his thoughts turn inward. He may drown them with maddening liquor; he may deafen them in riotous company; he may run from them in pleasure's exhilarating car; but the moment he makes a pause—allows that which is himself to come forward, there they are.

So Reynold Raleigh, in this quiet home influence of Lucy Calderwood's presence, began to have uneasy qualms of conscience, looking backward on his life and inward into his heart. Faint, irregular, vague, but still rankling pains, whose smart survived the stab of the accusing thoughts. Perhaps the sharpest thorn was Barbara. From the bottom of his heart, Reynold Raleigh wished her away from Arlingcourt Rise. He had never cared for her only as the adroit tool to work out his purposes. And of late, he had grown to be terribly annoyed by her uneven moods; her jealous anger; her constant reminders of the ugly past, which, though it was safely out of the power of harming him, was not an agreeable remembrance. The very evidence of the fevered passion which was slowly consuming her, her hollow eyes, her hectic cheeks, her restless step pacing at night for hours together, in the room beyond his, angered him excessively. He would have given half his income to have induced her to choose another residence. But his first hint of such a wish had met with such a wild burst of anger on her part, such a fierce vindictive accusation, as convinced him it was not by such a method he could accomplish his wish.

"Go away, indeed," she cried, flashing her ireful glance into his face, and clenching the hand which was growing thinner and whiter every added day—"Go, and leave you to enjoy yourself in complacent security! You—you, honoured, wealthy, and happy, making love to the new lady of Arlingcourt Rise; and I pushed away to die as comfortably and quickly as I may. No, I thank you, sir. Miss Arlingcourt left me a place here, and I shall take it. I shall keep it. It is my retribution," she added, looking around, with a sudden superstitious terror creeping into her eyes, and pressing both hands against her heart. "It is Miss Arlingcourt's revenge."

He took a step away from the wild face.

"What do you mean, Barbara? What theatrical airs you give yourself. If you would only be quiet and contented, like an ordinary woman, we might be very comfortable here. The past is past, and there's no help for it. And the future is set down for me. You know very well it is impossible for me to marry."

Barbara laughed shrilly. "Yes, yes, there is some comfort in that. You cannot marry this blue-eyed girl. You cannot marry her. And by-and-by she will find some one who will make her care more for him than all this wealth, which has its curse, and then it will be your turn. Don't flatter yourself, Reynold, that your turn is not to come. It is part of Miss Arlingcourt's revenge. You will feel it yet, and she will come to you, as she does to me, every night in her white shroud, with her scornful smile, and pointing finger, and mock at me!"

"She comes to you?—nonsense, woman. You will not disturb me by your idle tales." And Reynold curled his lip in derision.

Barbara West lifted her face, with a stern smile on her white lips.

"Reynold," said she, "look at me. You know what I was, a gay, careless, unscrupulous woman. I did not shrink from dark deeds. I did not cover nor tremble once. But look at me now."

He could not help raising his reluctant eyes, and letting them follow over the worn, haggard countenance. Could it be, indeed, that these few months had so changed the gay, pleasure-loving, *nonchalant* Miss West? That worn, nervous, miserable creature—was it really she?

"Reynold Raleigh," said Barbara, in a low, awed voice, "I tell you it is her work. It is the curse of her ghostly presence, and the living torture of my life here. Do you think when she has done with me, she will leave you alone—you, the prime mover in the iniquitous plot which has brought about this life of yours and mine? I tell you your turn will come. Beware!"

"The woman's brain is giving way," muttered Reynold Raleigh, as he hurried away from her; but he shuddered, and drank a full goblet of wine, before he wiped off the moisture beading his forehead.

And then he sent off a hurried despatch to summon a party of gay young people, and gave his thoughts to planning entertainments and excursions, and in the drawing-room was presently bright and cheery again.

Of course Lucy Calderwood was consulted with regard to the matter, and she added to the list the names of three young lady friends.

The whole party arrived promptly.

An invitation to the fine, old, hospitable place, under Reynold Raleigh's skillful management, was not lightly regarded in the county, and those honoured, considered themselves fortunate in being selected.

First, there were the Hon. Mr. James Wharton and his wife, Lady Mellicent Wharton, a personage duly cognizant of the circumstance that she represented the highest rank present, who accompanied their son Charles Wharton. No one knew better than Mr. Raleigh, the *prestige* it gave the party to have these high-bred and aristocratic people among them, and, therefore, though he had no especial esteem for Mr. Charles Wharton, who was only just from Oxford, he had put them down first upon the list. Then there was Guy Dalrymple, a thoroughly good fellow, and the life of whatever circle he entered. Reynold would have been sorely disappointed if he had failed him, but he did not. And with Guy came a young lieutenant of the Guards, whom the former had taken the liberty to bring, filling out thus the *carte blanche* his host had given, when he wrote: "If you come across any other respectable gentleman, as good a fellow as yourself to entertain people, bring him with you."

He was a fine-looking young man, this Lieutenant Kirkwood, and when he was introduced, all the young ladies assumed their most graceful manners. All but Miss Lucy Calderwood, who paused abruptly in the very act of extending her hand, and opened her blue eyes, till they looked like violets dilating to the sunshine.

And the sunshine came, for she burst the moment after into a merry laugh, her whole face dimpling over with mischief.

"Why, Mr. Rolf," said she.

And the young gentleman looked none the less amused, and by no means displeased.

"It is Miss Lucy, certainly. This is a pleasant surprise indeed."

And the pair in a moment after were in one of the bay-windows, chattering as eagerly as a couple of school-children. Upon which Mr. Raleigh eyed them uneasily, and queried if his friend Guy could not have made a better selection.

Then, beside, there was that easy, comfortable fellow, Joe Wardwell; who had as handsome a country seat of his own as the best of them, but who chose to spend half his time in a snug little shooting-box, with one or two boon companions, or drifting in and out, as at present, in some pleasant party of his friends; an indolent man, agreeable enough when he chose to take the trouble, which, to be sure, was not often, for the only thing which could thoroughly rouse him, was a smart brush in the hunt, or on the race course.

And as a foil to him, the distinguished lawyer, Mr. Egerton Egerton, whose name was on many learned lips in the London bar.

As for the ladies, they made a lovely and refined group. The Misses Martindale, Jenny, bright and blooming as a rose, Blanch, fair and delicate as her name; Miss Madge Ireton, the heiress; Lady Mellicent, handsome and stately; Mrs. Egerton, the lawyer's new-made wife; and like a ghost of her former self, the faded, sickly shadow of what had once been the fascinating Miss West.

This was the group to be seen every morning gathered in the cosy little parlour, when the mail-bag was brought in to be distributed to the guests at Arlingcourt Rise.

(To be continued.)

#### THE AGE OF ABRAHAM.

THERE are some Assyrian tablets at the British Museum with curious inscriptions relating to the goddess Nana. According to these inscriptions, Assur-bani-pal, King of Assyria, who commenced his reign B.C. 668, in one of his Elamite wars recovered an image of Nana which had been captured by the Elamites either 1,635 or 1,535 years before (through an error of the Assyrian scribes the copies differ in the hundreds cipher, and there is nothing in the inscriptions to show which is correct). This image had been carried off from the Temple of Bit-Khilianna, in the city of Uruk (the Erech of Genesis x. 10, and the modern Warka), and set up in the city of Shushan, the capital of the Elamites. After it had remained there 1,635 years, Assur-bani-pal, King of Assyria, captured the city of Shushan, and he states that, in obedience to the will of the goddess, he brought the image from the city of Shushan to the city of Uruk, and set her up in the temple of Bit-Khilianna once more.

A similar passage was also inserted in the Decagon Cylinder of Assur-bani-pal, col. vii. lines 9 to 24, but is too mutilated to read without the aid of the tablets. In the same Cylinder, col. vi., the King states that he recovered from Shushan the spoil which the former Kings of Elam had taken from Babylonia.

These inscriptions are interesting, not only on account of the high antiquity of the date mentioned, but because the only conquest of Babylonia by the Elamites of which we know (and which probably these tablets refer to) was in the time of Kudur-lagamaru, King of Elam (the Chedor-laomer of the Bible), who conquered Babylonia and Syria, and who, according to Genesis xiv., was contemporary with Abraham.

The name of this king was discovered some years back, by Sir H. C. Rawlinson, under the form of Kudur-mabuk, on bricks from the ruins of Mugheir, the ancient city of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham. The same distinguished scholar subsequently found the phonetic name of the goddess "Lagamar," answering to the Hebrew word, translated in our version "Laomer." The fact that in the name of this king the title "Mabuk," meaning mother of God, appears instead of Lagamar, is no objection to his identification with Chedor-laomer, as it was the constant practice of the Babylonians and Assyrians to write the titles and monograms of the gods, instead of their proper names.

Kudur-lagamaru established his son on the throne of Babylonia, and the dynasty which they commenced was the "Median" dynasty of Berossus. The people whom Berossus calls Medes, he tells us, conquered Babylonia about this time, and established a dynasty, which lasted 224 years.

This dynasty of Berossus was the Elamite line, and probably the number 1,635 years, in the Assyrian tablets, is the correct one, for 1,635 years before the campaign of Assur-bani-pal make about B.C. 2,290, the probable date of the conquest of Babylonia by the "Medes" of Berossus.

It has been suggested that the chronology of this period may have been as follows:

1st Dynasty, Medes (Elamites), 224 years, B.C. 2296 to 2072.  
2nd Dynasty, — 361 years, B.C. 2072 to 1974.  
3rd Dynasty, Chaldean, 455 years, B.C. 1974 to 1516.  
4th Dynasty, Arabian, 245 years, B.C. 1516 to 1271.  
5th Dynasty, Assyrian, 536 years, B.C. 1271 to 745.  
6th Dynasty, Assyrian, 33 years, B.C. 745 to 722.  
7th Dynasty, Assyrian, 96 years, B.C. 722 to 626.

There are several kings whose legends were published in Vol. I. of the "Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia," who reigned in Babylonia before the Elamite conquest, and the dates of these monarchs must be much older than we have hitherto supposed; the late Baron Bunsen suggested this some years back in his history of Egypt, and now we have a fixed standpoint in the date of the Elamite conquest, we can see that his idea was correct.

The date of Abraham has always been so doubtful that chronological writers have placed it at various periods, ranging from the sixteenth up to the twenty-ninth century B.C. Now the Babylonians, from an early period, kept a very accurate account of time, and if Abraham was contemporary with the conquest of Babylonia by Chedor-laomer (as the book of Genesis states), we may fairly assume his date to have been about B.C. 2290.

INFECTIOUS LODGINGS.—It ought to be generally known by sea-side and other lodging-house keepers

that letting lodgings which have been occupied by lodgers afflicted with contagious diseases, before the said lodgings have been effectually purified, is now an offence punishable by law. The Sanitary Act of 1866 (Vict. 29 and 30, c. 90, secs. 38 and 39) provides that,—"If any person knowingly lets any house, room, or part of a house, in which any person suffering from any dangerous infectious disorder has been, to any other person, without having such house, room, or part of a house, and all articles therein liable to retain infection, disinfected to the satisfaction of a qualified medical practitioner, as testified by a certificate given by him, such person shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding 20*l*. For the purposes of this provision the keeper of an inn shall be deemed to let a part of a house to any person admitted as a guest into such inn."

#### CAUSE OF FLAVOUR IN FRUIT.

The question of radiation at night and its influence on the growth and development of fruit, is not sufficiently recognised. The gardener goes to bed at night under the full impression (and he is right to a certain extent), that his plants are at rest also, or ought to be, and so dismisses them from his mind until the morning. But nothing is ever perfectly still in nature; a constant reaction is going on between day and night. In the day the luminous rays of the sun aid the leaves to decompose the carbonic acid gas in the air, which is absorbed by the trees, and takes the place of the oxygen gas they evolve; at night oxygen is absorbed, and carbonic acid to a certain extent given out. The radiation which takes place where trees have the full benefit of the open air at night, but not otherwise, greatly facilitates these natural operations, and tends to keep the trees in a healthy state. In the animal economy, which is only a higher development of the vegetable, we fully recognise the necessity of rest undisturbed, and of offering no check to the excretions, forming as they do as important an element of health as the secretions. We cannot, therefore, interfere with this radiation without materially affecting the natural functions of the tree. Experience, independently of science, tells us what a subtle agent it is in the growth of plants. A narrow coping, for instance, on the top of a wall is sometimes quite sufficient protection to save the early blossoms on our trees by arresting the radiation. Is it not fair to infer that the same coping will influence the ripening of the fruit in summer from the same cause? How much more the covering of a whole roof?

It may be said that the latter remarks involve a contradiction in stating the valuable services rendered to the trees by night-air and radiation, and in the next sentence recognising the necessity of interfering with them; but we must not lose sight of the fact that our subject has reference to peach trees, &c., which are in an abnormal state in our climate. The object, therefore, should be to meet this difficulty by protection in spring and increased heat in summer, when required, and at the same time to interfere as little as possible with the natural functions of the tree. As may be supposed, we find by experience that the more carefully this is attended to the finer will be the fruit in size and flavour, and the more luxuriant the foliage of the trees. Now, we venture to say that the "orchard-house railway," as an assistant to the orchard-house itself, is by far the best means to this end that has yet been brought forward. The labour it involves is so slight that every change of atmosphere, whether for retarding or advancing the growth of the fruit, may be taken advantage of all through the year, without the slightest inconvenience; and under the guidance of a clever gardener such results may be produced as will fully satisfy him. The advantage of removing lights overhead have long been recognised by our best gardeners; but the advantages it offers are very inferior to the railway system, for these reasons—it interferes with the grapes, which can now be grown in the orchard-house without injury to the trees, but which require less ventilation and more heat than fruit trees; a roof fitted with moveable sashes would cost more money than the railway; the trouble of moving them would be infinitely greater; and when done the effect upon the trees would by no means be equal to the advantages of the free circulation of the air all round.

CHARITY INSTEAD OF POMP.—According to the "Annual Register" for August, 1760, there were expended at the funeral of Farmer Keld, of Whitley, in that year, 110 dozen of penny loaves, 8 large hams, 8 legs of veal, 20 stone of beef (14 pounds to the stone), 16 stone of mutton, 15 stone of Cheshire cheese, and 30 ankers of ale, beside what was distributed to about 1,000 poor people, who had sixpence each in money given to them.





[A DARK DEED.]

## YU-LU.

## CHAPTER XII.

On the following morning the princess arose early, and in company with Tsi she walked out into the garden, but she did not remain there long, for the air that came up from the low, damp marsh in the distance was not only chilly, but its vapours were disagreeable and penetrating. As they returned to the house they were met by Li, the prince's confidential valet and attendant. He was a young man, somewhere about thirty years of age, with a quick, intelligent look, but yet with an evil expression about his strongly marked features. It was he who always accompanied the prince on his long journeys, and he was often closeted with Kong-ti for hours together. Now the princess had a strange dread of this man, not because she ever entertained the fear that he would harm her, but because it seemed to her that her husband loved him better than he did her.

Li saluted the women as he met them, and Tsi noticed that he eyed the face of the princess very sharply. She did not like the movement. She wondered why he had been left there, and she naturally came to the conclusion that it was for no good cause. She made up her mind to watch him.

Shortly after they returned to the house breakfast was ready, and it was served in the spacious drawing-room which connected with their chambers. After the meal was finished, and the dishes cleared away, Tsi asked to be spared for a while, and her mistress gave a ready assent. The maid went to her chamber and got the phial which she had filled from the tea-bowl, and having hid it beneath the folds of her dress, she went down into the garden.

In one corner of the enclosure was a small building, erected over an artificial pond, in which were kept two cormorants—a sort of water-raven, which feeds on fish. These two birds had been trained to catch fish for their master, and they were very tame and kind. Tsi entered the building, caught one of them, and having secured it between her knees, she pressed upon its beak and poured nearly half the contents of the phial down its throat. She marked the one she had thus treated, and then let it go. The bird flew back to its perch, but seemed to betray no indignation at the treatment it had received. Tsi watched it for some minutes, but finding that the tea produced no immediate effect, she left the place, thinking she would go again during the day, and see if the dose had produced any baneful effects.

Through the day the princess occupied herself in reading the Chi-king, a collection of ancient poems by Confucius. She found much there to interest her, and the day wore away without much sadness or despondency. Several times during the afternoon Li made it in his way to request an interview with the princess, for the purpose, he said, of ascertaining how her health was: for the prince had left particular directions that he should be summoned immediately if the change of residence was likely to operate unfavourably. Poor Niso was pleased with this seeming solicitude on the part of her husband, and she did not notice the quick, eager glances which Li cast upon her. But Tsi noticed them. She saw how restless was his eye, and how searching was the gaze he fastened upon her mistress, and she believed he was watching for a sign which he had reason to expect, but which she had overthrown.

Towards the latter part of the afternoon Tsi stole out from the house, and went once more to the place where the cormorants were kept. She opened the door and went in. Both birds were upon the perch, but she saw that the eyes of the one she had operated upon were closed, and that its head was hanging upon its breast. She took a long stick which stood in one corner, and gave the bird a gentle stroke upon the breast. It raised its head a little and uttered a low, rattling moan, but did not open its eyes. Again Tsi struck it, harder than before, and this time it partly opened its eyes, and made a motion as though it would have extended its wings. It swayed to and fro for a moment, and the girl could see that its hold upon the perch was beginning to loosen. In a moment more the bird uttered another moanlike sound, it half opened its eyes, just enough to show that their brightness was all gone; it loosened its wings, its head started up with a quick gasp, and then it fell off into the water below. In an instant its mate leaped down upon it and began to tear it in pieces! Tsi waited to see no more. She had analyzed the liquid, and she knew now where to look for a part of the danger, at least. She walked back to the house, very slowly, for she had much to think about, and she wished to have her thoughts somewhat settled before she saw her mistress. At length the expression of anxious thought disappeared from her face, and the light of a calm purpose appeared in its place.

When Tsi reached the drawing-room of the princess, she found that Li had again been admitted to her presence. The girl saw him gaze into the face of her mistress, and she could see that while he spoke he was eagerly watching every movement of her countenance. But Niso never appeared to better

advantage than she did then, for Li was telling her how anxious her husband was that she should not only be happy, but that her health should be most scrupulously cared for. All this made the face of the unsuspecting princess glow with animation, and Li could detect not the first shadow of a circumstance upon which to rest the belief that she was unwell in the least.

The faithful maid watched him as he left the apartment, and shortly afterwards she heard the tramp of a horse. She looked out of the window, and saw Li riding off towards Nankin.

"I think my husband loves me," said the princess, arousing from a deep reverie into which she had fallen. "I should think you would find happiness in such a thought," was the girl's reply.

"Oh, I should, if I were sure of it."

"Then you are not wholly assured that he loves you?"

"At times I feel so; but then other thoughts come to cloud the happiness of the idea. If he loves me, why should he wish me to be here? I hope he loves me, and I wish I could secure the belief free from all doubt."

"Well," returned Tsi, "perhaps ere long all doubt will be removed, and until that time be as happy as you can. Do not worry your mind with useless surmises or groundless fears. And now let me ask of you a favour. I am very much fatigued; I slept but little last night, and I should like to lie down and obtain a little rest."

Of course the princess gladly granted the request, but the maid first obtained from her a promise that she would call her if Li returned, or if anyone at all came from the city. It was now nearly five o'clock, and Tsi hoped that she might gain some hours' rest. She went into her own chamber, and having closed the door she softly entered the sleeping-room of her mistress. She knew the very spot where she had seen the man disappear on the night before, and thither she turned her attention. The wainscoting was all of camphor-wood, and worked in deeply-carved panels, each panel containing a hieroglyphic quotation from some religious book of maxims. Upon a close examination Tsi found that the panel next to the head of the bed was worn in one or two places, as though by friction it was sliding against some other hard substance, and also that it was loose, though she could not move it from its place. She was confident, however, that it was a movable panel, and that she had not been played upon by any wild hallucination, and having thus satisfied herself, she went back to her own chamber and lay down upon her bed. She was somewhat fatigued, and ere long she fell asleep.

It was ten o'clock when Tsi awoke, and hastening at once to the drawing-room, she found her mistress still sitting up.

"You should have called me before," she said, looking up at the dial with some surprise. "I did not mean to sleep so long."

"But you slept so soundly," returned the princess, with a kind smile, "that I would not awake you. I have not been fatigued."

"But you must have been sleepy?"

"A little, perhaps."

"Has anyone visited you?"

"No. I have neither seen nor heard anyone since you left me; except once when I entered your chamber."

Tsi was satisfied with this, and shortly afterwards she helped her mistress to undress.

"You will not sleep much, I am afraid," remarked Niso, after she had lain down.

"Oh, I shall not suffer on that account," returned Tsi. "I don't know but that my nap will make me more sleepy. I will go and prepare your tea, and then I will retire, and if you are disturbed in the night I shall be the more ready to attend to you."

The princess acknowledged her gratitude by a smile, and having placed one of the candles upon the sideboard the maid went out to prepare the tea. When this was done she set the bowl upon the small stand by the bedside, and having arranged everything to her satisfaction she went out, closing the door after her. She had slept nearly five hours, and she knew that she should now be well able to watch through the night, for she had resolved that not another night should pass unwatched by her so long as there was a shadow of doubt or danger. She had made a small puncture through the silk of the door that separated her room from that of her mistress, and through this hole she could see all that transpired about the princess's bed.

An hour passed away, and a part of that time Tsi had spent near the silken door, and a part in the drawing-room. It was somewhere between eleven o'clock and midnight that she had taken her seat for a few moments at the window of the latter room. The window was partially open, for she felt oppressed and sought a breath of fresh air, little heeding for the few moments she intended to sit thus, the unwholesome dampness of the atmosphere. She had not been in this position more than a minute when she was attracted by the sound of low, stealthy footsteps upon the pavement of the court. She looked eagerly out into the gloom, and at length she was confident that she saw two figures approaching the house. She watched them narrowly, and near a clump of tea plants they stopped. She listened, and heard the low hum of voices, but she could neither understand what was said, nor distinguish the speakers. In a few moments the hum ceased, and the figures moved out into the main walk, and soon afterwards disappeared around an angle of the building.

Tsi was now all alive with excitement, but yet not unnerved. She waited a few moments to see if the lurking figures would re-appear, but seeing nothing of them she noiselessly closed the window, and then moved towards her own bedroom and stationed herself at the silken door. For two hours she watched there without seeing anything, and she had just moved to the side of her bed to sit down, when her quick ear caught the sound of a movement in Niso's chamber. She glided quickly to the door and peeped through the aperture she had made in the silk. The panel in the wainscoting was just being slowly moved from its place, and in a moment more Tsi saw the head and shoulders of a man. The face was concealed by a robe which was pulled over the lower features, leaving the eyes alone visible. The girl's heart beat quickly, and her breath came short and heavy, but her thoughts were clear, and her wits were at hand. The man, for a man it surely was, put his head into the room and gazed carefully about him. Then he bent his ears as if to listen, and seeming assured that the occupant of the bed slept soundly, he noiselessly entered. He first moved towards the sideboard upon which the waxen taper was burning, and as he let the robe fall from his features in order to free his mouth, that he might extinguish the light, Tsi saw his face. A sudden faintness came over her, and an exclamation of horror came high escaping her lips, for she had seen the well-marked features of Prince Kong-ti!

Almost unable to credit the evidence of her own senses she gazed more intently upon the face of the intruder. That face was now close to the light, and every feature was revealed. There was no room for doubt—the terrible truth could not be hidden. It was really and truly the prince! He extinguished the light, and his movements were now guided by the pale beams of the newly-risen moon. Tsi moved not from her place, nor did she even breathe aloud. The throbbing of her heart made more noise than

did her breath, for over the heart she held no control—it would beat tumultuously in spite of her.

The prince moved to the bedside, and looked for a moment upon the face of the sleeping wife, and then he drew a phial from his bosom. Tsi saw him shake it, and then she saw him pour its contents into the bowl of tea which the princess was to drink. He did this, and then with his finger he stirred the beverage. He placed the phial back into his bosom, gazed once more upon the sleeper's face, and then glided back from whence he had come, and closed the panel after him. Tsi listened until she was assured he was gone, and then she threw herself upon her own bed; but she remained there only for an instant, for even an instant lost might be fatal to her mistress. She went back to the silken door and opened it, and creeping softly in she took the bowl and carried it away. In the closet of the drawing-room she had left a second bowl of tea, and this she took to the chamber of her mistress, and placed it where the other one had been. None of the movements had yet awakened the princess. She slept on, totally unconscious of the terrible realities that were growing into life about her.

After all this had been done the faithful watcher went back to the drawing-room and sat down by the window, where she had before been. This window looked towards the west, being on the opposite side of the building from the bed-chamber of the princess, and consequently was entirely shaded from the light of the rising moon, while the scene without was all plainly revealed. Tsi had not been there long before she saw the two figures come around the angle of the building, and she readily recognized them as the prince and his attendant, Li. They came into the shade of the building, and stopped directly beneath the very window where the girl was sitting. She could hear the hum of their voices, but she could not understand what they said, for they spoke very low and cautiously. She had moved the sash partly open, and she bent her head as far forward as possible. In this position she could occasionally catch a word that was spoken.

"She could not have drank any of it," the girl distinctly heard Li say; but the answer of the prince she could not understand.

"How much will it take?" Li asked.

"But very little. A few swallows will be sufficient," returned the prince.

Tsi was sure that those were his words.

She tried to hear more, but though an occasional word came distinctly to her ears, yet she could not make out the connection. At length the prince walked away, and Li turned and went around the building. The girl watched for some time longer, but as she saw nothing more of the men she arose from her seat. Before she did so, however, she heard the distant tramp of a horse upon the city road. She knew it was the prince returning to Nankin.

The handmaiden returned to her chamber and looked in upon the princess. Niso was just reaching forth for the bowl, but Tsi did not open the door nor give any signal of her presence. She saw her mistress drink, and then lie down again. Then the girl left her post and sought her bed. She did not sleep, for she felt no desire to lose herself in slumber. She listened for any movement that might come from the adjoining chamber, and while she listened, she reflected upon what had passed. She had a difficult task before her, for the princess must know what had transpired; but she did not shrink from the work now—she only felt sad and heart-sick to think of the blow that was to fall upon the sensitive soul of her beloved mistress.

### CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER Paul Ardeen had seen the juggler enter the inn, he sought the side of Yu-lu. His mind was in a whirl of excitement, for he knew not what course to pursue. He feared to meet Ye-fu-hi, not that any personal danger could accrue to himself, but for fear that in some way he might be separated from his companion. Even the bare thought of this latter catastrophe filled his soul with pain, and in a measure incapacitated him for calm judgment. He knew well the promise he had given to the juggler, and he feared that even now, the strange man was in pursuit of him. If such were the case, and he was discovered, he might be detained, and by thus being subject to scrutiny the secret of his companion's sex might be revealed. A thousand dim, undefined fears whirled painfully through his mind, and at length he resolved to escape unobserved from the place, if possible. He knew that he had pledged his word with the juggler, for the performance of a certain work, but the safety of Yu-lu was not for a single instant to be sacrificed for that. He tried to make it appear that there would be no danger—that he had better remain where he was, than attempt to escape, but he could

not. The confidence which at the ruins he had felt in the juggler was gone, and once more came the distrust, the dim dread of the strange man. Had he been alone, he would have given the man hardly a thought, beyond the natural curiosity which his appearance excited, but it was for another now that his heart beat.

"Paul," said the maiden, looking up with sudden surprise, "you seem troubled. What is it?"

Paul sat down for a moment, and bowed his head. His thoughts were quickly framed, and returning his companion's look, he said:

"I think we had better leave this place."

"Leave it? Now?" uttered Yu-lu, in sudden alarm.

"Is there danger?"

"I do not know that there is," returned the youth, speaking as cheerfully as possible; "but yet I had rather not remain here. The man who came into the yard a few minutes since will recognize me if he sees me, and I have no desire to run any risk. If we could get away unobserved, I think I should do so."

"Oh, Paul, if there be danger, let us flee," cried Yu-lu in terror.

"Do not be too much alarmed, for there may be no real danger."

"But who is this man?"

"Did you ever hear of Ye-fu-hi?"

"What, the juggler of Nankin?" asked the maiden, starting.

"Yes."

"I have often heard of him. The prince has told me of him, and I think the prince feared him. He is a terrible man."

"In what way is he terrible?" Paul asked, ready at any moment to seek information respecting the juggler's real character.

"His power is dreadful," answered Yu-lu, with a shudder. "I have heard my uncle speak of him, and the prince has told me of him. If he be here and knows you, let us flee."

Again Paul considered, but by this time the idea had become firmly fixed in his mind that if the juggler discovered him, Yu-lu would be snatched from him. He forgot all his cooler judgment, he forgot all his natural boldness. Love had made him fearful, and in this frame of mind he resolved to flee. The juggler appeared as an evil spirit to his excited imagination, and he thought only of escaping from him.

"Yu-lu," he said, "did you ever imagine why the prince feared Ye-fu-hi?"

"Yes, I have had my thoughts on the subject, though Kong-ti never told me distinctly, as of course he could not, since the very fact upon which the suspicion rests he wishes to conceal from me. I think," the maiden continued, lowering her voice, and speaking tremulously, "that the juggler is some near connection of the prince's wife. From words that I have heard fall from Kong-ti's lips, I should judge that such was the fact, and it may be that Ye-fu-hi possesses some clue to the prince's faithlessness, and seeks to expose him."

A beam of intelligence shot across Paul's mind. This was exactly in accordance with the juggler's words and manner in the ruined temple, and our hero thought now that he had a clue to the whole. He told Yu-lu of his meeting the strange man in the ruins, and of the promise which he himself then made.

"And," he added, "I have no doubt that the juggler wishes to get you into his hands as an evidence against the faithless prince."

And Yu-lu's fears ran in the same channel. It was, they both thought, a natural conclusion, and of course their minds were made up to get away from the place as quickly as possible.

Paul remembered that there was a back way leading to the stables, and that from the stables he could pass out into the garden. This way he resolved to try, and having examined his pistols, and helped Yu-lu arrange her dress, he went to the door and looked out into the passage. He could hear voices in the bar-room, but the way to the stables seemed to be clear. He went back and took Yu-lu by the hand, and bade her be of good courage. She assured him that she should not falter, and with this assurance he set forth. He passed on by the head of the stairs that led down into the hall, and descended by a sort of ladder that was used by the servants. This led him to the back entry-way, and on opening the door at the foot of the ladder he found himself, as he supposed he should, in the passage leading to the stables.

"You will not take the horses, I suppose," whispered the maiden.

"No," returned Paul. "We could not get away with them, and, besides, we do not want them. We must make our escape by water."

It was now quite dark, and our adventurers were secure from any observation. They had no difficulty in making their way to the garden, and, after



some trouble in picking their way amongst the shrubbery, they gained the road at a distance of some rods from the inn, and then started at once for the shore of the lake. Here they found a number of boats, and luckily Paul soon discovered the very one in which he had crossed the lake before, and, on hailing the captain, he found that he had remained upon that side of the lake ever since, only going out occasionally to fish. Our hero asked the man to take him and his companion on board, and make sail at once, but to this very strong objections were raised.

"Wait till morning," urged the captain, "and then I'll start as early as you wish."

But Paul urged his business—he must be in Shanghai at such a time. Then the captain talked about the weather; he was fearful of a storm. At length Paul said something about "gold," and the captain's ears were opened. An ounce of gold possessed the "open sesame" upon the fellow's will, and, in a few minutes, the crew were called to get up the iron-wood anchor and make sail. They grumbled considerably at the order, and, at first, seemed unwilling to obey. Paul was anxious that there should be no disturbance, and, slipping forward, he placed a piece of silver in the hands of each, and from that moment they had no more objections. In half-an-hour the clumsy vessel was clear of the shore, and pushing lazily through the water. The wind was from the south, and though not very fresh, was yet strong enough to fill the lumbering bamboo sails, and shove the craft ahead at a fair walking pace.

"We are clear now," said Paul, as he sat by Yu-lu's side, under the weather quarter-rail; "and I am glad that the juggler came as he did, for it has been the means of hurrying us along on our journey."

"I hope we are safe," was Yu-lu's reply. She did not speak as one having any fear, but yet there was a tinge of anxiety in her tone.

"Oh, I am almost certain of safety now," quickly returned Paul, in a light, confident tone; "for when we reach the opposite shore we shall be only about a day's journey from Shanghai, if we can obtain more horses, and when once in Shanghai we shall be most assuredly safe, for no power can take you from me then. Courage, my love, and let hope be your star to-night."

Yu-lu pressed her lover's hand, and in low tones she murmured her sweet hopes. Once more the dangers were forgotten, and together they wandered off into the heaven which their loves had made. An hour they passed there in holy, happy communion of soul with soul, rivetting more firmly the bonds of affection, and probing more deeply into each other's heart.

Deeper and stronger grew their love, and brighter and more peaceful opened their dreams of bliss. They seemed to touch the earth but lightly with their feet, for their dreams were of heaven—of a heaven which had grown out of their own souls, and into which the god of love had entered and built his throne. They thought not that such a thing as separation could come; for they dreamed only of the things of life; and a separation would have been death most surely.

At length, as the air grew more damp and chill, Paul conducted his sweet companion to the low, dingy cabin where there some half-dozen bamboo frames suspended from the beams overhead, and in which were mattresses and blankets. Paul assisted Yu-lu to get into one of those swinging cots, and then he took possession of the one next to her. Yu-lu murmured the prayer which Paul had taught her, and having bade him good-night, she closed her eyes to sleep, and shortly afterwards the youth himself sank to slumber, with a prayer upon his lips; it was a prayer for the gentle, confiding being who had trusted her whole of earthly care to his keeping—and he prayed that heaven would smile upon his faith, but cease to bless him when he should forget to live for Yu-lu. Before he slept he knew that the breeze was freshening, and this gave him more comfort, for he dreamed he was being wafted more swiftly towards his haven of safety.

Paul was dreaming a wild fantastic dream, in which, Yu-lu, Ye-to-hi, the prince, and himself were strangely mixed up, when he experienced a shock that came nigh throwing him from his cot. He heard a loud crashing above his head, mingled with the shrieks and yells of the crew. As soon as he could fairly recover himself he sprang from his place of rest and spoke to Yu-lu. She was frightened, but Paul made her promise to remain where she was till he returned, and then he hastened on deck. He found that the mast had gone over the side, and that the one-sided bowsprit was also gone.

"Tien-tan have mercy!" cried the captain, flying about the deck like a crazy man, gazing first at the splintered stump of his mast, and then running to the bows to see how the deck was torn up, where the

heel of the bowsprit had come out. It was some time before Paul could get the fellow to answer any questions, but when he had partially come to his senses, our hero found that the vessel had struck, and following the direction of the captain's finger he saw a tall, dark pyramid looming up just under the quarter. The rock was plainly in sight, lifting itself boldly from the water, and the craft had struck her bowsprit plump upon it. The mast had been a worm-eaten, rotten affair, and had gone from the force of the concussion.

Paul knew that the accident was the result of the most reckless neglect, and he berated the lubberly captain soundly, but the lesson had no more effect than it would had it been delivered to the wind, and Paul gave over the task. As soon as he found that there was no immediate danger he hastened below to set Yu-lu's fears at rest, and as soon as she learned all the particulars, she accompanied her lover on deck.

Paul now set about the work of finding if there were any leak, and in this he had to take the lead, for the captain could only find time to bemoan the loss of his worthless spars. The hull of the vessel was found to have sustained no serious injury. There was one slight leak close by the stern, but it was stopped without much difficulty, and then Paul went to see if there were any means at hand by which the vessel could be kept upon her course. He found one solitary oar, and a long pole with a setting-pike in one end and a hook in the other. There was not a spare spar, nor was there such a thing as an inch of sail.

"What can we do?" asked the youth, after he had made an examination of everything on board.

"Do nothing but trust in Buddha," replied the captain.

"But suppose Buddha will not help you?"

"Then I'll pray more."

"But if he does not listen, then?"

"I'll burn gold paper for him."

"But if he refuses then?"

"I'll burn more."

"And suppose he is silent still?"

The Chinaman gazed up with a sort of bewildered expression, and after a few moments of thought he said:

"Perhaps you are so wicked that the great Buddha thinks I had no business to take you."

Paul could not but smile at the fellow's simple faith in the power of his Buddha, but the smile soon faded away, for he began to realize that he might have to spend a long time on board the lumbering wreck. There was no means of putting the hulk upon her course, and after considering upon every possible point, our hero came to the sad conclusion that the vessel must have her own way. It was now about two o'clock in the morning, and the wind was still from the south. As near as Paul could calculate, they were being drifted through the water at the rate of about two miles an hour.

"It's hard," he said, addressing Yu-lu, after they had gone back to the cabin. "We may be two or three days knocking about here."

The maiden was greatly troubled when she saw that her lover was uneasy, for she trusted all to him. Paul saw this, and with an effort he threw off all appearance of fear, and tried to make it appear that there was but little room yet for danger.

"I'm sorry to be thus detained," he said, drawing the maiden upon his bosom, "but we have not much to fear. As soon as we touch the shore we can find horses, and then set forward at full speed. Let us hope for the best."

Yu-lu did hope, and being fully assured that there was no immediate danger from the elements, she once more sought her couch.

When the daylight at length came, Paul went on deck and took a survey of the horizon, but he could see no signs of land. The wind still held from the southward, and at sunrise it seemed to freshen a little. The captain had partly recovered his self-possession, though he still bemoaned his loss, but when Paul told him that he would give him enough to buy new spars and sails, he became cheerful and happy.

That day passed away, and Paul spent the greater part of it in teaching Yu-lu to speak his own language. He was surprised at the progress she made, and as he redoubled his exertions she rewarded him by the increased attention which she gave to his instructions. On the next morning land was to be seen to the northward, but the wind died away almost to a calm, so that at night they had made but a few miles nearer to the distant shore. On the third morning they could see that the shore was considerably nearer, but the wind had hauled to the southward and eastward, and though it blew quite fresh, yet Paul did not like it, for it was blowing him in a way he had no wish to go. On the fourth morning the shore was not more than fifteen miles dis-

tant, but the wind was very low, and it was not until near evening that they managed to get off a boat from the shore by their signals. It was a small, skiff-like boat, with square bows and stern, which came off, and contained two men. The captain made known his wishes, and after much fuss and trouble a line was got from the bows of the hulk to the boat, and then the two shoremen began to pull at their oars. This helped the vessel a little, for before dark she had been hauled alongside of a rough pier, and with thankful hearts Paul and Yu-lu stepped upon dry land. They had been four days and four nights on board the vessel, and those four days were all lost, for with a fair wind they might have crossed the lake in twelve hours at least. But it was too late now to repine, so they tried to forget their past misfortune, and hope for better days to come.

They had landed at the mouth of a small stream, and at a short distance there was a village which the natives called Ye-tchi. The captain of the vessel was acquainted with the place, and he conducted Paul to a small inn, where was found very respectable accommodation. The youth did not dare now to trust himself away from Yu-lu, so he engaged a single room, making up his own bed upon the floor, while his companion occupied the bamboo couch.

Night came on, and Paul and Yu-lu joined their hands in silent prayer. The youth gazed out upon the starry heavens, and his eyes rested upon a point towards his native land. At that moment he thought of the fairy tales he used to read when he was a boy, and he even prayed that some kind genii would take him up with his love and carry him away to his island home. He was sorry that the age of the genii had passed.

(To be continued.)

## LADY ROSLYN'S MYSTERY.

### CHAPTER XLVI.

Look through mine eyes with thine, true wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine,  
My other, dearer, life in life,  
Look through my very soul with thine.

Tennyson.

THE too anxious doctor, Sir Peter Carey, was compelled, in the course of a few days, to sanction the return of Earl Roslyn to Roslyn Manor. Lord Roslyn arrived there, attended by Vayle Malvern, late one tempestuous autumnal evening.

The sky was gloomy, but in the west a bank of sunset clouds glowed with a sombre and lurid light; the wind went moaning and muttering among the woodland paths; the yellow leaves, driven forward by the blast, went whirling along in fantastic circles; the surface of the lake was troubled, like the countenance of a man who has heard ill tidings. Vayle Malvern, leaning back easily in the carriage, watched the earl's pale face with anxiety.

"It is a solemn looking evening, Roslyn, this one which you have chosen for your escape from the madhouse. Nay, don't shudder at the words," he added, laughing, "we all know you are not mad, and have never been so, only your cruel wife would have the world believe the idle tale. Cheer up, Roslyn, I believe we shall find she has left the Manor. Do you dread the meeting?"

"Yes," responded the earl, sorrowfully. "I dread it, because I am now convinced of the deep aversion wherewith I have inspired Lady Roslyn. I feel, as you say, that a separation is only a justice which I owe to her. Adine may be tempted into wrong if her temper be irritated by her proximity to me."

"I never heard a man talk so patiently of a female fiend," cried Malvern, savagely. "What are you thinking of, Roslyn, in heaven's name, that you can pardon this woman, and regard it not as her sin, but as her misfortune, that she has twice attempted your life; then described you as mad, and caused your detention in a lunatic asylum. I verily believe you would crouch at her feet now, if she came forward and spoke kindly to you."

"You are utterly mistaken," replied the earl. "Adine has sunk in my esteem, albeit, that she has not lost one atom of my love. Therefore I cannot crouch at her feet."

At this moment the carriage drew up in front of the mansion. Vayle Malvern sprang out and assisted the earl, who was still weak, to alight.

"Cheer up, cheer up, Roslyn!" said the schemer. "We shall have you amongst us all in the hunting field next winter, foremost at a leap. Now you are decidedly feeble. Lean upon me, mount the steps—how many they seem to an invalid; now rest in that chair. What, Lady Roslyn!"

Adine walked out of a room on the ground-floor. She wore an evening dress of pale mauve satin. The

diamond bracelet, which Rellen Polack had returned, glittered upon her arm. She looked pale, and there was a timid, almost terrified, look in her glorious dark eyes. It was not that she had the least dread of the earl's possible insanity, but that Vayle Malvern had told her that the earl was much incensed against her. Yet his dark face glowed for an instant, when his eyes rested upon her, with a momentary rush of love, hope, and rapture; but the glow and the rapture passed away, and left the face of Lord Roslyn pale, sad, almost stern.

"Eustace," faltered Adine, taking his hand, "Eustace, how glad I am you are come home again."

"Ha, Adine! were you not glad to see me driven away, rather?"

"No, Eustace, it nearly broke my heart."

The earl laughed a low, sad, incredulous laugh.

"What! were you so pained to see me driven away, Adine?" He shook his head mournfully and looked away from the tender dark eyes of his wife. "You must allow me to get to my own apartments, Lady Roslyn," said the earl. "I am not strong enough to-night to bear excitement. You also will be pleased to escape the tedium of my society."

A long, quivering sigh was the only answer of Adine.

"Well acted," whispered Vayle Malvern into the ear of Lord Roslyn, as he was following him upstairs. "She would entice you to her own apartments, and drag you again, Roslyn."

"How inexpressibly lovely she looked," muttered the earl. "What a heavenly look in her dark eyes!"

"She sighs and weeps only to betray," said Malvern.

They had now entered the private suite of apartments that belonged to the earl. Vayle Malvern ordered a light repast of coffee, French wine, fruit, and French bread to be prepared for Lord Roslyn, together with an omelet. The unhappy nobleman sat down before the cheerful blaze of a perfumed wood fire, which made the whole of the room deliciously fragrant. Malvern sat opposite to him.

"It is singular that poor Sir Horace Hawkade should have been murdered just at the time of your misfortune," began Malvern. "I have told you all about it, and also that there is a fuss and stir about that young girl, Lady Margaret's new *protégée*; it is supposed that she is the daughter of the late Lady Hawkade."

The earl raised his head, and listened with some interest to the details, which were at that time exciting, and amusing the greater part of the British public. But although the late Sir Horace had been the guardian of his wife, he found it difficult to concentrate his thoughts upon the leading topic of the day.

When the refreshments were brought in, he partook of them slightly, smoked a small cigar, then dropped into silence.

"What is Adine doing?" he suddenly asked of Vayle Malvern. "I should like to see her."

"She is in her own room," replied Malvern.

"Would you object to sending her to me," asked the earl.

Malvern hesitated; a sudden thought struck him; he walked slowly from the apartment. The earl waited in long suspense for his return. At length a soft footstep sounded in the adjoining room. Another moment, and the door was pushed gently open.

A beautiful woman stood before Eustace, Lord Roslyn—a tall, graceful female form, clad in lustrous black silk; her black hair was tastefully arranged, the lovely face glowed with excitement, fear, one might nearly say tenderness.

"My Lord," said Mrs. Dasham, "Will you pardon this intrusion?"

"Pray be seated," cried the earl, courteously.

He had bestowed scarcely a thought upon the night wanderer since the time when he had been assured of her safety and comfort within the walls of Roslyn Manor.

"My lord," said Mrs. Dasham, hesitating to seat herself. "I am pained, grieved, to intrude but your lordship kindly promised me, that you would do all in your power to aid me in discovering the hiding place of my unkind husband."

She paused as she spoke, that she might watch the effect of her words upon the Earl of Roslyn.

The unhappy nobleman, his own heart torn by the supposed cruelty of his wife, was in a mood to sympathize with a fellow creature, who was suffering from the neglect of a faithless husband. Vayle Malvern had calculated upon this sympathy, when he had induced the too yielding needlewoman to intrude herself and her sorrows upon Lord Roslyn's notice. The whole was a deep-laid plan of the consummate schemer.

"I would willingly do anything, everything, Mrs. Dasham," said the earl, "but you see I have lost time; I have been the victim of a medical blunder,

my health is injured for a time. I shall be compelled to go to Switzerland, to recruit my strength, at present I hardly see how I can help you; have you tried the plan of advertising?"

A little calmness and judgment might have showed Mrs. Dasham that Earl Roslyn entertained no unholy love, no unlawful admiration for herself; but Vayle Malvern had bewildered her fancy, intoxicated her vanity, deceived and dazzled her imagination with the hopes of a coronet, a title, and boundless wealth.

"You are too good to me, my lord," she said, weeping again.

He looked at her in surprise.

"How much she suffers," he said, "and how devotedly she still loves the man who has ill-used her. Rely upon it that I will not suffer the matter to rest, my dear Mrs. Dasham," said Lord Roslyn. "Nay, do not distress yourself so terribly," for she was again weeping violently.

The earl went to his medicine-chest, brought out a cordial, mixed it in water, and entreated Mrs. Dasham to drink it.

While the earl bent kindly, and it seemed tenderly, over the needlewoman, the door of the apartment was pushed suddenly open, and to the amazement of Lord Roslyn, and the almost guilty confusion of Mrs. Dasham, Adine walked into the room, and looked with flashing eyes upon her husband and the needlewoman.

"I was mistaken," said the countess, in a tone of icy hauteur. "I was told that Lord Roslyn had sent for me to his apartment. Here is the note, Lord Roslyn," and Adine placed a small note at the side of the large vase on the mantelpiece.

"Another time when your lordship sends for me I hope you will choose times when this person is not in your apartments."

Before he could answer her, Adine had swept out of the room.

"Am I the victim of a conspiracy, Mrs. Dasham?" asked the earl, sharply, "and are you concerned in the plot? You come to me; a note is written in my name to beg my wife to visit me. She comes, and is evidently displeased to find you here. How is this, madam? I cannot but think that there is something underhand in this; to what does it all tend?"

The earl spoke angrily. Mrs. Dasham's weak heart quailed for fear, yet she firmly believed that Lord Roslyn loved her, and was the author of the forged letters which she had received.

"My lord, my lord!" she said, "it is scarcely fair to upbraid me thus, when you—you—yourself—"

Another moment and an explanation must have transpired, but the evil genius of Lord Roslyn, Vayle Malvern, ever on the watch, entered in time to prevent all clearing up of the mystery.

"Lord Roslyn, I must prescribe rest and freedom from excitement," said the schemer. "Ah, Mrs. Dasham, weeping and exciting yourself about that recreant husband. You must go away. Sorry to be rough, but you really must. My care for my patient must plead my excuse for any apparent brusqueness. Go, now, go! I cannot allow this."

The poor creature turned round upon the cruel man who had induced her, by dint of hard pleading, to intrude herself into the presence of Lord Roslyn, and now drove her from it with reproaches—she turned upon him, we say, a look full of upbraiding, expostulating entreaty, but she was weak, and he hurried her from the room without giving her a chance to explain her conduct.

"Do not allow Mrs. Dasham to come to me when I am alone," said the earl, impatiently, to Vayle Malvern. "Adine came here just now, saying that I had sent her a note inviting her to come, and she left the room, it seemed to me, in high displeasure."

Vayle Malvern laughed scornfully, and tore the note, which he had himself written, into shreds.

"Displeasure," he echoed. "Well, Roslyn, now are you satisfied that your wife is your enemy?"

"I am, alas! but too well convinced of it," said the earl, gravely.

As day followed day, the estrangement grew, strengthened, and widened between Lord Roslyn and his countess. Each learned to regard the other as a foe; each loved the other with a burning affection which words are too weak to paint, but the husband believed that the wife sought his life, and the wife wept in agony over the thought that her husband sought her disgrace. Vayle Malvern widened the breach daily, but although the estrangement was now a frightful gulf between the noble pair, not any steps had as yet been taken for a divorce. Neither of them desired it; in fact, both dreaded the last fatal step which would separate them for life, and all Vayle Malvern's efforts seemed thrown away, when he worked hard to bring about that legal estrangement which would be irrevocable.

Meanwhile the trial of Joe Matton had come to an

end. His confession was made. Alix was established as the niece and heiress of Lady Alden; and that worthy lady wrote to her young relative, the Countess of Roslyn, to tell her of the approaching nuptials of Miss Treherne (otherwise Alix) and a certain Mr. Rellen Pollack.

"It is a marriage that I do not like," wrote Lady Alden to Adine, "but the sweet girl is bound in honour, so she thinks, to fulfil a promise made to the mother of this gentleman, on her death-bed. What must be, must be, and the wedding will take place next Wednesday, very quietly, at the village church of Alford, a distance of fifteen miles from Roslyn. I am going down there to my old country-house next week, and I should be rejoiced to see you, but Mr. Polack is most eccentric with regard to the arrangements for his wedding; he declares that nobody shall be invited; nobody shall even witness the ceremony, save myself; and he has expressed his intention of carrying off my beloved girl, immediately after the marriage, to the East, to spend the winter and part of next year. He will indeed rob me of my child, just as I have found her again!"

The countess resolved that she would send the bride a present of some value. She turned over her ornaments carelessly, thinking to herself, in the lonely bitterness of her heart, that such trifles made little in the sum of happiness. Then she wondered within her own mind, how she should manage to convey the splendid bracelet and necklace to Holford House, the seat of Lady Margaret, and she resolved to ask Vayle Malvern to be her messenger. She sought him, and asked him to undertake the commission. Vayle Malvern hesitated. To leave the earl and countess in Roslyn Manor unwatched, (notwithstanding that they lived in separate wings of the mansion, and never met each other), might be to bring ruin upon his schemes. He resolved not to undertake the errand. He pleaded severe indisposition; and finally, Adine resolved to go to Holford House, in spite of this most eccentric Mr. Polack, and deliver her wedding-gift herself. Fate, or rather providence, was now about to expose villainy; to reward virtue; to tear the masks off the evil faces of those who had so long deceived, entrapped, and made wretched, the good and noble personages of our story.

Lady Roslyn's maid fell ill on the very morning of her intended departure, and Mrs. Dasham, the needlewoman, whose eyes were beginning slowly to open to the fact that she had been deceived, entreated Lady Roslyn to allow her to accompany her in the capacity of attendant.

Lady Roslyn, as we have seen, had no belief in the absolute guilt of Mrs. Dasham. She was generous, unsuspecting and most forgiving. She thought it a good sign that the needlewoman did not desire to remain under the roof of Roslyn while its mistress was away. In short, consent was given, and the needlewoman and the countess set off together.

But the tangled threads of this story are now about to unwind themselves, and the pattern of the whole will soon be placed plainly before the reader's eyes. When Lady Roslyn and her attendant had set off in the travelling-carriage for their journey of fifteen miles, a sudden wild desire to follow his wife laid hold of Lord Roslyn. He sent for Vayle Malvern, and asked him whither the countess was gone.

"Her ladyship says that she is going to pay a visit to the newly-discovered niece of Lady Alden, and to make her a present before her wedding; but I have my doubts—the Count Lechelle is in London."

"I will at once follow them to Holford House," cried the earl. "Listen to me, Malvern, if she be not there, if I find this journey a pretence, I will no longer delay the necessary steps. I will have a divorce."

Vayle Malvern's heart quailed, for he knew that Lord Roslyn would find his wife at Holford. He strove to prevent his kinsman from following out his design, but Lord Roslyn was firm. Vayle Malvern insisted on accompanying him. Another carriage was ordered, and the earl followed his wife. Adine's carriage and pair had an hour's advance of Lord Roslyn's. In about two hours and a half, from the time of setting out, the horses drew up in front of Holford House. It was a glorious afternoon in late October, the sky was blue, beautiful as hope, a few golden-tinged clouds were gathering about the couch of the sun in the west; the foliage of the woods, dyed with the thousand rich tints of autumn, glowed in the evening brightness.

When Lady Roslyn descended from the carriage, she was informed that Lady Margaret had driven into the nearest market-town, to make a few slight purchases, but that Mr. Polack and Miss Treherne were walking in the shrubbery, and would soon return.

"I do not know Mr. Polack," said Adine, "and I do not like to intrude upon his pleasant walk, still I feel inclined to stroll through the woods for half an



hour this splendid evening. Mrs. Dasham, will you accompany me? And we must try to avoid the paths where these lovers are straying."

All this occurred while the countess had the diamonds safely sewn into the lining of her bodice. The two went into the woods, and strolled along nearly silent.

Adine was thinking of her estranged husband at Roslyn. Suddenly a turn in the path brought the figures of Rellen Polack and Alix before the eyes of the countess and Mrs. Dasham. Both uttered a loud scream.

"Count Lechelle!" cried Lady Roslyn.

"Edmund Dasham! my husband, my husband!" exclaimed Mrs. Dasham, in wild excitement. "You, you, the cause of all my misery—deserter, base-minded villain. I have the certificate of our marriage, and were you about to commit bigamy,—to marry this girl?"

"Was he married to you?" asked the countess, who had now, by a mighty effort, regained her serenity, and stood like a marble image, pale, beautiful, stately, by the side of Mrs. Dasham. "Tell me when did he marry you?"

"Six years ago," responded Mrs. Dasham.

"Thank heaven, I am out of his power then, for he married me five years ago, and of necessity the marriage is null. Oh, Count Lechelle, you have played out your evil game to the last, but you are detected; henceforth I shall have no reason to dread your extortions, your visits. My husband shall know everything."

Rellen Polack seemed to have lost the power of utterance when he found himself confronted with the trio—women whom he had so cruelly wronged. Alix stood by silent, and agast, yet in her secret soul relieved and hopeful.

"You are my husband. You are Edmund Dasham," said the needlewoman, frantically.

"I am your husband," said Rellen, "but my name is not Dasham, it is Polack, as Alix can testify; still I am at your mercy. I do not love you, but I will make a provision for you. I will go abroad."

"Let me seek my husband," said Adine. "Come with me, Mr. Polack. You owe it as a duty to try to restore peace to the home whose happiness you have wrecked. You must confess to Lord Roslyn the wild wedding, the seizure for the debt at the door of the church; your reported death; your sudden appearance and demand for money; all this you must confess, and then you shall not only be pardoned but paid handsomely, and if you would be reconciled to your wife I should rejoice."

Rellen Polack was at last completely humbled; he followed his wife, Adine, and the amazed Alix, to the house. There a great surprise awaited the whole party. Vayle Malvern and Earl Roslyn met them in the hall. Adine rushed up to her husband, and clasped his hand.

"Oh, Roslyn," she said, "the mystery, the dreadful mystery, is at an end. I am your wife, Eustace; all my secret meetings can now be explained. You shall learn all from me. If I have anything to forgive," she glanced at Mrs. Dasham, "it is forgiven already."

Words would fail us if we attempted to express the rapturous joy of the earl when Adine told the secret whose dark shadow had so long hidden her loving heart from her husband's eyes. She gave, in the presence of those assembled, a short succinct account of the peculiar circumstances which had led to her marriage with Rellen Polack, while he flourished under the title of the Count Lechelle. She had been a romantic, timid girl, leading a secluded life under the roof of her stern guardian, Sir Horace Hawkswade, when Rellen, under the name and guise of the Count Lechelle, obtained power over the baronet, and won his way to his confidence. Soon he interested the romantic fancy of the poetic and dreaming Adine; hardly knowing what she did, she consented to become the wife of the supposed foreign nobleman. As he was leaving the church with his bride he was arrested for debt, and Adine discovered that the supposed hero was a worthless adventurer.

She had never really loved him, but she believed herself to be his wife. Regret, shame, and awakened pride rendered her haughty and cold in manner. Then came a false report of the count's death, and she consented to marry Earl Roslyn. On her arrival at Roslyn Manor, Polack intruded himself, threatened to expose her, and demanded money. The reader knows the rest. Now that Adine knew she was not really married to the false count, she found voice and courage, and pleaded her cause with her husband.

"And was this all the mystery, my Adine?" asked the earl, fondly; "but, oh, if you had loved me, Adine, you would not have been fearful of confiding in me."

"It was you who were wanting in affection, Roslyn. Your eager desire for a divorce, as Mr. Vayle Malvern knows, was a sore grief to me."

Vale Malvern turned pale when the earl looked fixedly at him.

"My eager desire," echoed he—"yours, Adine, as Malvern has too often told me. He knows, my love, how you have struggled to free yourself from the bonds, and even now—"

"Stop, stop," cried Adine; "has Vayle Malvern told you that?—has he—when he has known that my heart has been bursting with grief, bleeding for love of you—told you that?"

"My Adine," said the Earl, "why did you send me to the lunatic asylum, when Malvern urged you to believe me sane?"

"Nay; look at the face of this traitor," cried Adine, "can you not read upon it that we owe all our misery to him?"

Vayle Malvern did not fling himself upon his knees and confess; he was too great a coward.

"I am guilty," he cried, "but I played for high stakes; confess that I kept the game up well."

He shrank out of sight, left the house, and the Roslyns never beheld his evil face more. The most perfect love, the most entire trust were established between the pair who had been so cruelly estranged. Hubert Sayton and Ada Treherne were united, and it would be hard to say, which of these two couples led the more blissful life.

Little more remains to be said. Rellen Polack repented of his sins, and emigrated to Australia with his wife: he was prospering when last we heard of him. The landlord of the "Raven," was sought out, found, and handsomely rewarded by Lady Hubert Sayton. Vayle Malvern has not been heard of for years; he is a wanderer, and an outcast upon the face of the earth. Thus, in the end, does virtue and patience in well doing find its reward, and villainy meets with its just punishment even in this world.

THE END.

THE spinning-wheel used by Queen Marie Antoinette during her imprisonment at the Temple, and given after her execution to one of her ladies-in-waiting, has just been inherited by a grand-daughter of the family, recently married to a Hungarian of high rank. This relic was to be seen last summer at the Universal Exhibition, and excited much interest amongst lovers of historic souvenirs.

AN OLD IRISH JUDGE.—There is still living in Ireland, in the ninety-third year of his age, an ex-Chief Justice, whose call to the Bar dates from a year before the Rebellion of '98, and who took his B.A. degree at Trinity College, Dublin, five years before the Legislative Union which O'Connell in his day and the Fenians of our own time have so strenuously laboured to repeal. It will be remembered that he retired from the Bench only just two years ago, at the age of ninety, on the return of the Tories to power.

A FEAST OF FAT MEN.—A curious gathering of portly men took place at Gregory's Point, Connecticut, recently. The occasion of this gathering was a clam-bake, to which no guest was invited who did not cause the scales to kick the beam at 200 lbs. avoirdupois. And these heavy-weight champions were all to be from Fairfield county. There should certainly be something remarkable in the air, the diet, and the physical conditions of life generally in this county, since it furnished to the clam-bake no less than thirty-nine men, the lightest of whom weighed 200 and the heaviest 315 lbs. The number of clams eaten by this formidable party is unfortunately not given in the account from which the foregoing particulars are taken.

INTEMPERANCE.—Strong drink has a tendency to banish reason, destroy health, and blight the prospects of men. It will give an unsteady gait, a trembling hand, a red nose, and a bloated face. The wine-bibber has his eyes full of rheum, his head full of confusion, his strength impaired, and his thirst perpetual. His breath is offensive and as hot as a furnace; his tongue ungovernable and boggling at small words. Alcoholic beverages expel reason, drown memory, and distemper the body. The incessant use of ardent spirits diminishes strength, corrupts the blood, and weakens the brain. Liquor causes internal, external and incurable wounds, and turns men into walking hospitals. Wine is a witch to the senses, a thief to the pocket, and a devil to the soul. A man who drinks to others "good health," and robs himself of his own, in so doing brings want and woe upon himself, his wife, his children and his friends. Worse thought than all, the drunkard incurs divine displeasure, and calls down upon himself the wrath of the Almighty.—J. T. Y.

A LADY'S DRESS SIXTY YEARS AGO.—In an interesting work recently published, "The Ups and Downs of an Old Maid's Life," we have an account of the dress worn by the authoress in 1807, at the private view of the Royal Academy. She says—"It

consisted of a short mantle of orange and purple velvet, which fastened on the right shoulder, and, crossing the bosom, was confined with a rich cord and tassels under the left arm. The dress was made of silk of the same colours, and the whole was trimmed with spotted leopard fur. I had a straw hat with a quilling of French net inside, and it was tied down under the chin with a silk handkerchief. My petticoat was made of clear India muslin, and had a train; it was very full and untrimmed. I had shoes of the same colour as the dress, and white gloves." She also thus tells of her dress at her presentation at Court—"After many long confabs between dressmaker and Lady Railton, it was at last decided that I should have a petticoat of pale yellow silk embroidered with silver, and a deep border of silver round the bottom of it; a double skirt, made of thin material, caught up with tassels in festoons; and a train of yellow crape entirely covered with silver spangles, and finished with an embroidered border. My head-dress was composed of pale yellow feathers and diamonds; the latter belonged to Lady Railton, who considered my coiffure most becoming, and was quite satisfied to be my chaperone on the occasion."

## MICHEL-DEVER.

### CHAPTER LXI.

"IF I were silly enough to write that reply to Mr. Ransom's falsehood, I will not be so undignified as to consent to elope with you upon our first interview. There is no danger that papa will come hither, for he is in love himself with a dashing widow, and from what Dr. Brandon said to-day, I scarcely think he will come home, even to look after me, till he brings his new wife with him."

"Threatened with a step-dame, too! You cannot hesitate about going with me after that. But I will not urge you to-day for a definite answer. My arrangements for our union are not yet completed; but I shall go steadily forward with them, in the certainty that you will consent to leave your prison and fly with me to the home I am preparing for you. It is a cosy little nest, May: the only heritage left me by my parents is a small cottage in the suburbs of London. It has a few acres of ground around it, and the house is tasteful, and perfectly comfortable, but it has no pretensions to splendour. Until very lately, it was occupied by careful tenants, who kept the grounds in good order; and to my partial eye, the place is a gem of beauty. It was the home of my childhood; and there my parents lived, in perfect union, till I had attained my fifteenth year. My mother then died of some chronic disorder, from which she had long suffered, and my father did not long survive her. With strict economy the rent of the place sufficed to support and educate me; and now I can look forward with certainty to a successful, if not a brilliant career. The friend with whom I studied my profession is a lawyer of distinction: he received me into partnership as soon as I graduated; and for the last three years I have attended to the greater part of the business of the firm. I have a fair share of the profits, and I feel quite able to maintain my house in good style, though I cannot yet afford the luxurious manner of living in which you have been reared. All in good time, though; for, if health be spared to me, I will give you all, and more than you will ask."

"I do not doubt the last assurance; but if you knew the loathing with which I have looked around the splendid home which has, for months been as a solitary desert to me, you would understand that, to me, a dinner of herbs, where love is, will be far preferable to all its grandeur. Such as your home is, I will share it with you, and do my best to make it happy. I shall not come to you a dowdier bride, either, Harry. I have a few thousand pounds that descended to me from my mother, and when I marry you, of course my little fortune will be yours."

"Excuse me, May; I shall never touch a penny of yours with the intention of appropriating it. I have always been of the opinion that a woman's fortune should be secured to herself, for she is less able to win a support than a man is; and in case of failure, or accident to the husband, it is manifestly unjust that what belongs to the wife should be taken from her. I do not apprehend any such catastrophe to myself, but I shall nevertheless take every precaution to settle your money in such a manner that it will still be under your control."

"You are very generous; but if I can trust you with myself, I can surely trust you with my fortune."

"True—and I will prove myself worthy of your confidence by doing what I think is right. I must be allowed to have my own way in this, May; for your

father shall never class me among the fortune-hunters he is so much afraid of on your account."

"How did you know that?"

"Mr. Thorne has taken pains to proclaim that you are not to inherit his wealth, as a warning to those who might be in pursuit of an heiress; he has furthermore said that when you marry he will not permit your fortune to pass into the hands of your husband. As to myself, I feel my own ability to win both position and independence, and I have that manly pride which induces me to prefer providing for my wife, in preference to being indebted to her means for my future advancement. Thus far I have been successful in my career beyond my most sanguine hopes, and I am justified in looking forward to something more substantial than I have already gained."

"But, Harry, it will make me so happy to be able to help you on in any way."

"As you will, my sweet love, by making for me the happy home I have looked forward to as the reward of my toils."

May finally consented to this, at the same time pleasing herself with the thought that her annual income would almost suffice to support the modest home of which she had consented to become the mistress, and she could thus aid her husband in his upward struggle, if in no other.

As the shadows of evening began to gather, Sinclair said:

"I shall remain four days longer, and every afternoon I shall come to this place, hoping to be joined by you, with the fair Nancy as your guardian angel. I see her now making energetic signals, which I suppose are intended as a significant hint to me to be off."

May arose, and laughingly said:

"Time has long lagged heavily enough with me, but this evening it seems to have taken wings to itself. I must leave you now, but at the same hour I came to-day, I shall be in the glen to-morrow. Good-bye."

"Yes—to meet again. But for that promise I should scarcely be willing to let you go. You remove from me the sweet influence of your presence, but you leave with me so dear a hope, that I can be happy in dreaming of it, and planning the fair future to be shared with you. My home will soon be ready to claim its queen, and then I shall ask for the last proof of your confidence in me."

After a moment of hesitation, May said:

"Papa has not treated me kindly, but I shrink from leaving his house clandestinely, unless I am compelled to adopt such a course. Had you not better write to him, Harry, and state what you have told me? He cannot be so unreasonable as to object to you for a son-in-law, and he will not care to have a grown-up daughter in his house now that he is about to bring a new wife home."

"I will write to Mr. Thorne on one condition, and that is, if he refuse his consent to our union, you will not hesitate to leave his protection for mine. I have little hope of a favourable result from such an application; but, to satisfy your sense of duty, I will make it. Your father will expect you to marry a man already rich; and I know, beforehand, that he will refuse you to me, who must become the architect of my own fortune."

"If he does, I will go with you, in spite of every effort to withhold me from you. That is my pledge, and here is my hand upon it."

Sinclair pressed the fair hand to his heart, and drawing her to his breast, he sealed the promise with more than one kiss upon the lips that uttered it.

May extricated herself from his arms, blushing and trembling, and hurriedly said:

"I must go; Nancy is making such violent demonstrations that some one must be coming this way. You had better screen yourself from observation behind the bower, for I should not like our meeting to become known to Mrs. Benson. She may have sent some one to watch me."

"It is undignified to retreat," he laughingly said: "but as discretion is the better part of valour, I obey my commanding general. To-morrow afternoon at five, remember, I shall await you here."

Sinclair had scarcely disappeared behind the screen of leaves, when a boy, whose business it was to look after the animals kept upon the place, appeared in the distance, apparently plodding along on his usual evening errand.

May moved carelessly from the spot on which she had parted from her lover and joined Nancy. The girl eagerly said:

"Barney has been sent here to watch us, Miss May. The pasture is on the other side of the place, and he aint never been here afore as I knows on. Old Roonatics has sent him to see what we was up to. I've been makin' signs ever so long but you didn't seem to mind 'em, an' I didn't expect nothing but that the little bogtrotter would come in sight of you afore Mr. Sinclair got out o' the way."

"All's well that ends well," said May, with a smile. "Harry can get out of Barney's path in time to avoid being seen. I shall speak to the lad, and ask him what brought him here."

"An' get some sharp fib in answer. He is too sharp to be caught in a trap easily. If he was sent, he aint goin' to let you know about it."

Barney, a shrewd-looking, half-grown lad, with a profusion of red hair and a pair of wandering greenish-grey eyes, came whistling on his way, as if unconscious of the presence of any one in his vicinity. As his eyes fell upon his young mistress he started very naturally, pulled off his broken straw hat, and bobbed his head before her as respectfully as he knew how. May paused and asked:

"What brings you into the glen, Barney? You know that on this side of the grounds you have no business."

"Be gorra, miss, and that same's thrue enough, barrin' the pig," replied the lad, with a strong Irish accent. "Me pet pig, Miss May, as Misthress Benson giv me for me own has got out of the pen I put him in, and I've hunted the crayther over the place widout comin' up wid him. Ye aint seen nothing of him now, has ye?"

"It's like your impudence," broke in Nancy, "to ask your betters if they've seen the brute you're related to. Go where the corn is planted, if the pig is really out. You know well enough he aint down in this hollow, an' that wasn't what brought you here, Barney O'Shaughnessy."

The boy stepped out of the path respectfully; but when the young lady had passed, he significantly said to Nancy:

"I owe you one for that, Miss Bane, and shure I allers pays my debts. I'll find the crayther I'm after, afore I'm done yet."

Nancy waved her hand menacingly towards him, and said:

"If you hunt for him in this part o' the woods agin, it won't be good for you—that's all I have to say to you, Barney Carrots."

The lad shook his hair, as she uttered this opprobrious epithet, and grinning broadly, said:

"It's goold, red goold, Miss Bane, an' me hair is me pride—it crowns me with the colour o' the risin' sun; and it's only envy in you to be callin' it carrots—wishin' ye bether manners, I bid ye good evenin', miss."

Nancy hurried after her young lady, and breathlessly said:

"That boy aint no more lookin' arter a pig than I am. He's been sent by old Fast-and-tight I know well enough, an' if he finds out that a man has been in the grounds, a-talkin' with you, your pa will hear of it afore the week's out. My! won't there be old hot to pay then!"

"Barney will not find anyone to report about," said May, calmly. "And if Mrs. Benson should write to my father, it does not signify. Mr. Sinclair will do the same, and ask his consent to our marriage. I am unwilling to leave my home without, at least, giving him the opportunity to do what is right by me."

Miss Bean regarded her wildly, and after a breathless pause, solemnly asked:

"Are you really going to spile all your prospects, Miss May, by telling of yer pa what's a-goin' on here? I thought you had more gumption than to put yerself in his power agin. He aint writ you a line since he went away, an' if I was you, I'd make sure o' gettin' away afore he can come here in one o' his orrie tantrums. Any ways, I may pack up and git ready to move, for he'll send me out'n the house quicker 'n lightnin' when he knows that I helped you to git yer letters sent, an' went with you to meet yer lover."

"I can't help it, Nancy, if he does; but I'll tell you what you shall do if papa sends you away. Harry is getting his house ready for us to live in, and you shall go and take charge of it till I come. I will give you money to take you there, and to get you something nice besides. How do you like that plan?"

Nancy became radiant.

"I like it best of anything, Miss May; an' I'll be the very economest housekeeper as is to be found. My! but you an' him has got along fast, considerin' that this arternoon is the first time you ever set eyes on each other!"

May blushed vividly; but she laughed, as she replied:

"Harry has seen me in church; and I had his picture, you know. We have written to each other twice every week for the last six weeks, and that has made us very well known to each other. He meant to marry me from the first, so he set about getting his home ready for my reception."

"But supposin' yer pa won't let you go, nohow?"

"It is due to papa to ask his consent to our marriage, but, if he refuses it, I shall find means to es-

cape, even if Mrs. Benson is set on the watch again. 'When there's a will, there's a way,' you know."

"Yer will may be strong enough, Miss May; but if you ever find the way to get out of yer pa's clutches, if he shuts 'em on you an' says you're to stay where you belongs, I'm mightily mistaken. If you valies my advice, I'd say get clear off afore he knows what's a goin' on."

"I can't do that, Nancy. I must satisfy my own conscience, let what will happen. You need have no fear as to the result. Harry is not a man to be thwarted, and he will find the means of rescuing me, even if I cannot soften papa and win him over to consent to my happiness."

Nancy struck her shoe against a rock that lay on one side of the path, and ruefully said:

"When that solid stone melts with pourin' water on it, you may soften yer pa, but not afore. But it's no use to talk—I see you've made up yer mind to make yerself miserable, an' what's more, to make that fine-spoken young man tear his hair an' wait his lot in the solterude o' that house he's preparing for nothin'."

"I hope he won't do anything so absurd as that. In place of spoiling his beautiful hair, Harry will set his brain to work to find some plan to rescue me from the captivity you seem to think inevitable."

By this time they had reached the house, and May went to Mrs. Benson's apartment to inquire into her condition. The invalid's eyes gleamed viciously as she said:

"So you've got back safe. I hardly ever expected to see you again arter you tramped out with nobody but that Nancy. If Doctor Brandon does b'lieve in her, I don't, for I know she'll put you up to all sorts o' mischief. You aint nat'rally out-breakin', Miss May, but that wadacious piece will give you the wust advice—but you hadn't oughter take it, I can tell you."

"I am not likely to apply to my servant for advice, Mrs. Benson, nor do I choose to be taken to task in this way by you. I came to see if you were any better, not to listen to your scolding."

"Better! no I aint better, I'm wuss—I'm one solid ache, an' it's all from trampin' roun' wi' you, an' gettin' myself dead beat wi' the walkin' you did jest to aggravate me. I aint takin' yer to task fur it, but you see what you's brought me to with your allymodin' up an' down as you has done since I was set to look arter you. I shall tell your father I'm down in the bed for a long spell, an' he must find somebody what's got more steadiness than Nancy Bean to go out with you."

"You can write as soon as you please—I have no objection. Good evening, Mrs. Benson. Hereafter I shall send to inquire into your condition, and report to me, for I do not choose to be spoken to in this rude manner."

May left the room, and the housekeeper ruefully muttered:

"Things aint right, or she wouldn't be so undependin' all to enact. She's found somebody to make frien's wi'—I'm as sure of that as can be. I wonder if it's that old doctor, now. If it is, who knows how long he'll keep me a groasin' on this bed? Oh, lor! there, that pain comes agin. Miss Gander, if yer name didn't suit you to a notch, you'd find something to do for me that would give me some repose."

"My name aint Gander any more'n your'n is goose," retorted the offended nurse; "an' if you will get to be settin' yerself achin' all over, how can I help it? I folly's the doctor's directions, an' that's all I promised to do when I come here to nuss you. If you gin me any more such talk, I'll jest walk off an' leave you to be took care of by Nancy."

"Oh, Lor, it has come to a pretty pass when a common hired nuss talks to me in this unspect'ul way. I has been used to desociate wi' yer betters, Miss Gandy, an' I aint inspectin' to be talked to like common folks by the people I pays to wait on me."

"If I am a hired nuss, you's a hired housekeeper, and I don't see a mite o' difference between us. As to your payin', I never 'spected to git nothin' from sich a ole stingy as everybody knows you is. Doctor Brandon told me that Miss Thorne would pay me to take care on you; an' if 'twasn't for the respect I has for her, I'd go away this minnit, and leave sich a commannerly thing as you is to do the best you could without me."

"Do you dare to call me a thing! you! you!" screamed the housekeeper.

But the farther outpouring of her wrath was suspended by a violent attack of pain, which fairly took all power of farther vituperation from her. The nurse, who was really a kind-hearted woman, did all that her skill suggested to relieve the sufferings of her patient; and, for a time, a truce was established between the two.

Mrs. Benson was sinking to repose under the influence of a powerful narcotic, when a faint tap came



to the door, and she roused herself to bid the applicant for admission to enter. Mrs. Gandy had gone to her supper, and she knew who had taken advantage of her absence to report to her the result of the errand on which he had been sent.

Barney came in, respectfully holding his battered straw hat in his hand, and made a low reverence as he approached the bed.

"Please, mum," he said, "I went after the young mistress as yeas told me, an' faix I don't belave she was glad to see me. She told me I hadn't no call to be that side o' the place, an' I'm not to go to the glin agin."

"Is that all you've got to tell me, you stupid gossion? What did I send you after her for? Can't you come to the pint at once?"

"Well, mum, I didn't see nobody a talkin' to her, but Nancy was on guard, and she wint on at me like bleas, coz I comed on 'em, an' I thought to-morrow arternoon I'd hide ahind that sate wi' the vines an' things fornest me, an' find out what they're up to. But you'll be sure to give me the gold pund you promised me, Miss Benson?"

"I'll give it when it's sired, Barney, lad. You jest foller 'em up, an' let me know what's a goin' on, an' you shall have the money. But it was only ten shillings, remember. Watch yer chances, an' come in here when that Gander is out of the room. She musn't know what you're up to on no 'count."

"Yis'm—I knows—an' I shall do my best to please ye. I'd best be goin' now, for I hears somebody a comin'."

"Yes—go out this other door, an' down the back stairs, an' when you comes agin, come that way."

Barney crept away, and Mrs. Benson muttered: "I knowed it—there's somebody gallivatin' round here, a lookin' arter that engrudent young gal. If her pa would only have sense enough to ax me to marry him now, wouldn't I hold her in hand, an' I'd keep him in order, too, rampageous as he is when he's in one of his ways."

Mrs. Gandy came in, took her place by the bed, and sharply said:

"It's time you was asleep, Mrs. Benson; if you go to gittin' yourself excited about anything, you'll git in a worse snarl than I got you out'n afore supper—an' you'll be a screechin' with pain this blessed night. Them composin' drops acts contrary, when folks don't try to be quiet themselves, an' give 'em a chance to settle the nerves."

"If you don't keep up a clatter wi' yer tongue, I shall soon sink in the arms of Morfy, Miss Gandy; but you is the unaccountablest talker I ever desociated with. I'm floatin' way now to the land o' dreams, but if you brings me back to the sorrows o' schin' bones, I won't let you git no depose yourself."

"Oh, I desay—you'd do yer best to aggravate me, though I was doin' all I could for you. You's welcome to sink into anybody's arms but mine; but I never heard tell o' Morfy afore, 'cept de chess-playin' man, an' he's far away from this."

"You's a poor ignorintramus, Miss Gandy; but I don't spect a nuss what has no intellectibleness to onderstan' my lit'ry delusions. I hear Mr. Thorne read 'bout Morfy out'n a book he called Shako-a-spear. A curus name for a man that only used a pen."

"No—I don't understand your delusions, an' what's more, I don't want to; you talks 'bout what you don't know nothin' yourself, an' then calls 'spectable people names coz they don't know what you means. As to ignorintramus, I think you's the biggest one I ever rand. I knows how to nuss people what's sick, an' I don't pertend to nothin' else."

How long the war of words might have lasted is uncertain, if the influence of the narcotic had not chained the tongue of one of the combatants. Mrs. Benson dozed off, and finding her no longer troublesome, Mrs. Gandy retired to repose with the agreeable conviction that she could hold her own ground against the patient she had undertaken to manage.

#### CHAPTER LXII.

On the following afternoon another interview took place between the lovers, but they did not remain near the bower. After meeting at this trysting-place, Sinclair drew the arm of May beneath his own and said:

"I heard a suspicious rustling among the vines just now, and I suspect that some one is concealed there who has been sent hither to watch us. It does not signify, as I have written to your father, and he will know my position towards you before any officious person can warn him of our meeting. Let us promenade on the margin of the stream, where the prying eavesdropper cannot overhear what we have to say."

Nancy was demurely sitting on the grass at the

entrance of the dell with her knitting-work in her hands, and May made a sign to her to approach. She spoke a few words to the girl in a low tone, and then moved away with her lover.

Nancy plunged at once into the nest of verdure behind the seat, caught Barney by the hair, and dragged him from his place of concealment. For a moment he seemed bewildered by the suddenness of the proceeding, but he recovered himself, threw back his shaggy mane, and with a malicious twinkle in his eyes, said:

"I've found out all I comed for, Mistress Nancy, an' I'll make use of it in spite of ye. The ould woman up yonder, she'll know what you're a helpin' Miss May to do. That ere nice-looking young man don't kape coomlin' here for nothin' an' she'll be a runnin' off wi' him if her pappy don't look sharp; but you'll git yer walkin' papers afore she gits a chance to start, I b'lieves."

"Don't be a idiot, Carrots, and what's wuss, a impertent one, coz I don't take no talk from the likes of you," replied Nancy, with a great assumption of dignity. "I wishes you to understand that the gentleman what comes here a talkin' wi' Miss May has business of importance to settle with her, an' he has writ to her pa to let him know of all about it. Now what do you say to that, you spyin' vagabone?"

The boy put his thumb to his nose and spread out his fingers with a flourish, as he said:

"No, ma'am, you don't come it over this chile wi' such chaff as that. If that ere young gentleman has business with Miss May, why don't he come to the house an' see her there?"

"Because it's pleasant to walk here in the shade o' the trees, to be sure; I aint a tellin' of you no falsehoods, Barney, an' if you knows which side yer bread's buttered, you'll not go back to old Achinbenes to tell her what you's seen down here. How much did Mrs. Benson offer to give you to come spyin' round here now? I don't care what it was, I'll give yer doublet to hold yer tongue; and if yer won't do it, I'll make my brother give you such a thrashing as will last you a long time."

Barney scratched his head as if puzzled, but presently said:

"It's meself that don't know how I'm to help takin' ye up 'bout the money, Mistress Nancy. It's a goold pund that ye'd have to gi' me, for the 'tother one offered me a half one."

"So you've been bribed, sure enough, you spalpeen. I'll git the pund from Miss May for yer and give it to yer to-night, if ye'll go back to Mrs. Benson, an' tell her that yer saw nobody about that hadn't a right to be here. That won't be a lie, anyhow, for that young gentleman yonder has the right to talk wi' Miss Thorne."

"Who gin it to him, Miss Bane?" asked Barney, stolidly.

"Taint none o' your business who did; but he's got it anyhow; an' yer tell jest what I say to yer, or Sammy shall take you in hand an' teach yer better manners than to come looking after things that don't consarn yer."

"I done what I was toold ter do, an' what I 'ar to be paid for doin', but if yer bids higher'n 'tother, I'll take yer goold an' be mum."

"You'd better be, if yer cares for yer bones, for Sammy's got a heavy hand o' his own, an' if I told him to lay on hard, he'd beat you to a jelly. March yerseff off now, and hold yer tongue, or it'll be wuss for you. I'll give you yer pay arter I git it from my young lady."

Barney thus dismissed, shuffled away, but when he was out of sight he snapped his fingers towards the glen and moved in the direction of the house, muttering to himself:

"I'll be even with you yet, Miss Nancy Bane, that's what I will. I'll take yer money, and the 'tother one's too, but ye'll see that I'll be too much for ye, in spite of Sammy wi' the heavy hand."

The lovers walked to and fro upon the margin of the romantic little stream that flowed through the grounds, talking such sweet nonsense as made the time pass with rapid wings. The heart of the lonely girl opened to new influences beneath the tender words and glances of Sinclair, and even at this early stage of their acquaintance, May felt that to give up the hopes he had kindled into life would be impossible.

Sinclair had no hope that his appeal to her father would be successful, though May clung to the belief that he would consent to their union. In the event of refusal every detail of the elopement that would then be their only resource, was discussed and settled. When the sun sunk behind the trees, and the glen began to gloom with the shadows of twilight, they, at length, reluctantly separated, with a promise to meet again on the following afternoon.

On their way home Nancy informed her young lady of the discovery of Barney behind the bower,

and gave her an account of the interview between them. That night Carrots received the gold piece for which he had bartered his fidelity to the housekeeper, with a promise of still farther reward if he were faithful to his new compact. He satisfied Mrs. Benson by creeping to her room and telling her that nothing had as yet been discovered that was worth telling, but he should keep up his espionage, and before long he had no doubt she would find his services worth the reward she had offered him.

The meeting of the pair continued from day to day for more than a week, for Sinclair had decided to remain till a reply came from Mr. Thorne. Every hour thus passed together deepened the attachment they had formed, till each one believed that the world would be well lost for the sake of the other.

On the afternoon of the seventh day the answer to Sinclair's letter arrived. It was brief, and to the point:

"CAPE MAY, August 2, 18—

"MR. HARRY SINCLAIR—Sir,—I deem it a very singular proceeding on your part to make a proposal for the hand of my daughter when I am in utter ignorance of your person, position and antecedents."

"It is true that you have referred me to various parties for information on those points, but, as I have neither time nor inclination to communicate with them, I must return a decided negative to your obliging offer to take Miss Thorne off my hands."

"In conclusion, let me say that I have other views for my daughter, and without my consent she will hardly venture to bestow herself on you, or any other man. If you are a gentleman, as you assert yourself to be, after receiving this you will withdraw all pretensions to a girl whose acquaintance you must have clandestinely made. I make no comments on such a course, as they would be superfluous; but I shall take my own measures to prevent any imprudence on the part of the young girl you are ready to entice from her home."

"WALTER THORNE."

Sinclair had scarcely expected a more courteous reply, but he felt offended at the cavalier style adopted by the writer, and every scruple with reference to the removal of May from her father's guardianship vanished as he read the words he had penned.

It was the hour for his usual visit to the glen, and he left the town immediately, and walked rapidly in the direction of Thornhill. When he came in sight of the trysting-place, he saw Miss Bean walking to and fro in an excited and agitated manner, and as he advanced towards her she exclaimed:

"It's all done and over, Mr. Sinclair; I knew how it would be when Miss May had that letter sent to her pa. I'm sent off at a minnit's warnin', an' there's a regular she-dragon come to look arter that poor lamb, what aint got no friends to stand by her in that house. She's a cryin' her eyes out over a letter that woman brought her. She sent this to you by me, but it was as much as ever she could do to get it writ without that Mrs. Black a findin' of it out."

In much perturbation, Sinclair took the little twisted note offered by Nancy, in which was written in pencil:

"My father has taken great offence at your letter, and he has written to me in a very violent manner. He has sent me a new duenna, who is to become my governess. She will occupy the same room with me, and her orders are never to lose sight of me for a moment. If you could see Mrs. Black you would comprehend how little hope of evasion is left, with such a woman on guard. She is as watchful and observant as a police detective; as cold and undemonstrative as if made of cast iron."

"My father gives no reason for his rejection of your proposal. He was far too angry to do that. He lays down the law to me, and takes care that I shall have no opportunity to break it, by setting this repulsive guardian over me."

"Oh! Harry, but for my faith in your love, and your power to rescue me ultimately from this thralldom, I should die. With the sweet hope of yet becoming yours, I can bear a great deal, but if that be taken from me, I shall sink into the deadly state of apathy from which your letters first aroused me. But for that burst of sunshine on my weary life-path, I believe I should have become idiotic. You were my saviour from such a fate, and to you I feel that I owe the devotion of my life."

"I abjure my allegiance to the father who has been one to me but in name, and if you can rescue me from the power of this dreadful woman, I will go with you without one pang of regret for the filial obligations I have violated."

"I have one friend in L—. Go to Dr. Brandon and tell him all. I think he will help us. He knows how violent and unreasonable my father is, and when you satisfy him as to your position and antecedents,



[BARNEY CAUGHT LISTENING.]

Me may be willing to do something to aid us. Show him this portion of my letter, and make him understand that I must escape from the life with which I am threatened here.

"Poor Nancy has been sent away by my father's orders, and she will give you this. I have promised her that she shall take charge of your house till I can become its mistress. But if she would be contented to remain in L—a few weeks I would prefer it, as I may need her services when you have arranged for my escape, as I know you will.

"There will be no possible way of communicating with each other by letter, unless Dr. Brandon will become our friend. He can have access to me, as he comes daily to Thornhill to visit Mrs. Benson, for there is little prospect that she will speedily recover.

"I have scribbled this at intervals, while Mrs. Black unpacked her things, and took possession of my room as coolly as if it belonged to her. I can now only add that I love you, I trust you, and when you can snatch me from the durance in which I am held, I will go with you.

After reading these lines, and pressing the last precious assurance to his lips, Sinclair placed them next his heart, and then turning to Nancy, said:

"The situation is an unpleasant one, but you need not despair of soon seeing your young lady free to go whither she will, with no guardian more exacting than I am likely to prove. I shall find the means to remove her from Thornhill in a few days at farthest, and you had better go to your friends in L—, and remain ready to accompany her when I shall call upon you to do so. She cannot be married in L—, and when we fly together, you shall go with us, Nancy."

"Oh, Mr. Sinclair, if that could ever be! But you aint a goin' to git a head of Mr. Thorne. Nobody ever has yet; an' I knowed how it would be when you writ to him. Miss May will pine and fret her heart out, as she did afore you came, an' made her think that she had something worth living for. I'll go to L—an' wait, but it won't be no use; you'll never get her out'n that dragon's clutches."

"I shall try at all events, and I do not despair of success. If I am defeated for the present, I shall still hope for a better day. If I cannot baffle Mrs. Black's watchfulness within the next three weeks, I will send you to my home, to remain there till its mistress comes to take her place in it."

Nancy brightened a little at this promise, but she was still very despondent. She said:

"Thank'ee, sir, I'll stop as long as you think best, and Miss May has given me money to pay my way till she can take me into her service agin. My mother

lives at Doctor Brandon's, an' she tole me to go there first, an' tell the doctor the trouble she's in. Arter that you could see him, an' find out if he'd stan' by her in her trouble. He knows all about the way she's been treated, an' mebbe he'll find pluck to help her."

"Perhaps so," said Sinclair, vaguely, for he was thinking deeply, and wished to be free from Nancy's presence that he might arrange his plans in solitude. "Follow the directions of Miss Thorne, and I will find means to communicate with you when we need your services."

"That won't be very soon, mind my words; but I'll go on to the town now, sir, and leave you to think things out."

As Nancy walked down the shaded pathway leading to a lower gate that opened from the grounds, Barney came forth from his concealment in a clump of undergrowth near the spot on which she had been standing, and making a mocking gesture of defiance, muttered:

"You've got yer walkin' ticket anyhow, Miss Bane, an' you'd not be to the fore to call me Carrots agin in a hurry. Goin' to get old Pillbox to help 'em, is they? Much good that'll do 'em, wi' me to spy on 'em. I likes Miss May well enough, but she's no business to be runnin' off with that ere yaller-haired chap, an' I'll tell on her jest to spite that Nancy."

Sinclair had walked up the glen, when he parted from the girl, and Barney took good care to keep out of his sight. Half an hour later he saw him sitting dejectedly on the seat beneath the bower, and then went slowly back to the house to make his evening report to Mrs. Benson.

To describe the wrath and astonishment of that personage at the advent of the new governess would be impossible. The small progress she had made towards convalescence was suddenly checked, and she declared herself worse than ever.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a carriage had been driven to the door of Thornhill, from which a tall angular woman, wearing glasses, alighted. She had on a brown dress, shawl and bonnet, and carried an umbrella of the same sombre hue in her hand. Two trunks were deposited in the hall, and their owner sharply inquired of Nancy, who had gone to the door to receive her:

"Where is Miss Thorne? I have a communication for her from her father which is very important. Show me a room—I am not accustomed to stand in people's halls, with their servants staring at me as if I was a *lusus nature*. Is your name Nancy Bean?"

"Walk in here, please'm," was the hurried reply "I'll tell Miss May that company's come—'tain't often we has any, goodness knows. But if you comes from Mr. Thorne it's all right."

"Of course it is all right, or I should not be here at all. But I ask you again, are you Nancy Bean?"

"Yes'm—that's my name an' I aint ashamed of it."

"Then you ought to be, if you are not. You may pack up your clothes and get out of this house within an hour. I have authority from Mr. Thorne to pay you your wages and send you off. I have come here to take charge of Miss Thorne's education, and to see that she is not allowed to form improper acquaintances. Here is my card and a letter from her father—take them to her and say that I am waiting to speak with her."

A brown leather satchel, with a steel clasp, was opened with a vicious snap, and the articles in question thrust into the girl's unwilling hands; then Mrs. Black sat suddenly down on the very edge of a chair, and looked straight and defiantly before her.

Nancy hurried to May's room and placed the letter and card before her, hysterically saying:

"My words has come true a'ready, an' I is ordered to go by a woman that's tuck possession o' the parlour, an' for that matter of the house too, an' she's been sent by yer pa to teach you how to behave yerself."

May looked startled at this sudden address; she glanced at the card and grew very pale—then without a word, broke the seal of her letter and read the cruel words it contained. It is useless to quote them, for the harsh language of an indifferent and offended father with such a temper as Walter Thorne possessed, are better imagined than repeated. He was furious that she had found means to form a clandestine attachment in spite of his precautions, and declared that nothing should induce him to receive Harry Sinclair as his future son-in-law. That he had wooed her in so underhand a manner proved to him that the young man was unworthy of confidence, and he chose to ignore the fact that his own course towards his daughter had left no other avenue open to either of them.

He ended by stating that Mrs. Black had till lately been sub-governess in a large boarding-school in which the pupils were very strictly kept. She was a thorough martinet, and would shirk none of the duties imposed on her. May was stringently commanded to submit herself to the constant surveillance of this Argus-eyed dame, and to make no attempt to evade her authority.

(To be continued.)





[MORTIMER DEFENDING LAURETTA.]

## THE FLOWER GIRL.

### CHAPTER III.

AFTER leaving the vicinity of the sorceress, Mortimer Clair, with Flaydilla on his left arm, and Lauretta clinging to his right, had directed his steps towards one of the gates of the enclosure, intending to hasten to his mother's house.

They had reached the gate, when Flaydilla cried out:

"Brother, we are going home, and have no flowers for my mother."

"True, my little pet," replied Mortimer, "and that must not be. I hardly think that the sorceress will dare to molest us again, especially as I see that the people have surrounded her. We will go back and purchase a garland."

"Mortimer," whispered Lauretta, in an anxious tone, "do not look around just yet. Are you listening?"

"Could you speak to me, Lauretta, and ask me that?"

"Thank you, dear Mortimer. But do not look around yet, for I am sure we are followed."

"By whom, Lauretta?"

"By two young gentlemen dressed as mummers."

"If they are dressed as mummers, how do you know that they are gentlemen, young or old?" asked Mortimer, as they crossed the green, yet not looking back.

"Oh, they twice stopped at the booth where you found me, and asked to purchase flowers, offering five times the price I stated if I would permit them to kiss me—"

"The rude scoundrels!" exclaimed Mortimer, flashing with jealousy.

"They took me to be like those bold girls in the other booths, Mortimer—ah, it was base and cruel of that old woman to expose a modest girl to such insults. I tremble lest you, Mortimer, think less of me now."

"Say no more about that, Lauretta," interrupted Mortimer, quickly. "My faith in your purity is unshaken, dearest girl, and I know you can readily explain all as soon as we can converse in peace. But of the mummers—how did you discover that they were young gentlemen? Ah, it is true," he added, after a quick and apparently careless glance over his shoulder, "we are followed by two mummers, masked, and in quaint disguise. But tell me why you think they are not of the rabble?"

Before we give the reply of Lauretta, it may be

well to state to the uninformed reader, if any are uninformed in these days of general education, what was meant by the term "mummers," a word which has almost gone out of use, though common in the times of which we write.

On all holidays many disguised themselves in masks and fantastic dresses, often of the most absurd and laughable kind, as well as of the most repulsive designs, and thus attired strolled through the streets, or jested and danced around the market-places, singing and carousing.

Broad and coarse humour, rude practical jokes pleased the taste of the age, and the wild and riotous of both sexes delighted in the immunity afforded by disguise to reveal unknown. Nobles and gentry, as well as the lowest ranks of the populace, thus attired, used their disguises as much for light and serious intrigue as for sport.

These maskers were termed "mummers" in the days of Richard III., and two of them were evidently following Mortimer Clair and his companions, whether through harmless curiosity or wicked intention could not be told.

"You see that there are two of them," replied Lauretta. "One in a blue dress, trimmed with silver lace, and the other in green and gold. Both wear masks, but he in green and gold is the chief. I believe they are young nobles—at least one of them—and the other is of the gentry. First, the material of their dress is new and very costly, their voices are smooth, and their language, though vulgar in meaning, correct and polished in utterance. I noticed too, that both wore golden spurs, and no one of a rank inferior to that of a knight is permitted to wear them. Even you, Mortimer, though of the gentry no doubt, cannot wear golden spurs."

Mortimer smiled at this remark, and then suddenly looked grave, saying:

"Some day I may wear them with hereditary right as well as these two gay gallants; at present what right I have to wear them I won with my sword."

He paused a moment as if in doubt, and then, taking a pair of golden spurs from his bosom, stooped and buckled them upon his heels.

"Ah, then you are a knight!" exclaimed Lauretta, amazed. "I knew you were noble by nature, Mortimer, but I did not know that you were a knight."

"You will not love me less for that, Lauretta?"

"Love you less, Mortimer! Alas! why should you love me?"

"Because you are beautiful and innocent, Lauretta. But what more of the mummers?"

"But tell me why you put on those spurs, brother Mortimer?" asked Flaydilla.

"To warn those maskers that I am not to be followed with insolent curiosity, or perhaps because they design to insult Lauretta in my presence."

"They drew off their gloves at the booth," continued Lauretta, "and I saw that their hands were fair and clean, and decked with jewelled rings, so you see that they must be at least of the gentry. Besides, I heard the one in blue and silver call him in green and gold Sir Simon."

"It is very probable then that they are as you suppose, Lauretta. We will pause at this booth, and perhaps they may pass on. Sir Simon did you say?"

"Yes, Sir Simon Vagram, I think," replied Lauretta, and, as she glanced at her lover's face, she added, "Ah, why are you so pale, Mortimer?"

"Sir Simon Vagram? Are you sure?" asked Mortimer, laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and halting abruptly, though still several paces from the booth towards which he had directed his steps. "You make no mistake in the name, Lauretta? You are certain that he in green and gold was called Sir Simon Vagram?"

Lauretta was surprised at his agitation as he spoke. His face was ashy pale, though a bright red spot burned upon each cheek, his dark hazel eyes gleamed angrily, and his broad, white brow looked darker, fiercer than Lauretta had ever imagined the noble brow of Mortimer Clair could look.

"I know his companion called him Sir Simon Vagram," replied Lauretta, decidedly. "Do you know him?"

"It must be his son," said Mortimer, speaking his thoughts aloud, and not heeding Lauretta's question, "the son of Roger Simon Vagram, now called Lord Roger De Montfort. It is impossible that he should know me. He may not be so great a villain as his father. We will see."

They moved on and soon stood near the flower-booth, in which two bold-faced, brazen-looking young women were selling garlands, wreaths and bouquets.

The throng of spectators and buyers was so great that Mortimer saw it would be difficult to force his way to the flower-table unless he left his companions, and this he was unwilling to do.

"Let us wait," he said. "We have time enough, and besides, I wish to see if those two mummers intend to continue their annoying pursuit."

It was then that he was seen by the sorceress, as we have narrated.

Mortimer, however, was not looking towards Sibilla, but kept his eyes fixed upon the two mummers, who contrived to advance with an idle, sauntering

pace, until they halted within a few feet of him and his companions.

Their masks were plain, though of white velvet, leaving nothing visible of their faces except their eyes. These they fixed rudely upon the beautiful and blushing countenance of Lauretta.

"So," said he in green and gold, with a light laugh, "the beauty of the flowers has flown from her roses to roam with"—here he stared at Mortimer, and added, "with—what shall we call this gallant, Sir Barton?"

"Call him the king of crows," replied his companion, alluding to Mortimer's black garb.

"Sir," said Mortimer, haughtily, "I am the friend and protector of this lady, as you may learn to your cost. Go your way and we will go ours."

"Best let him alone," whispered Sir Barton to his comrade. "He is a stranger to me, but he wears spurs and is no country simpleton as we thought. Come, there is fight in his face and eyes."

"The girl pleases me, Barton, and though she is a prude, this tall fellow shall not ruffle it so loudly with me. If you are afraid of his spurs or his eyes you may leave," replied Sir Simon, pettishly.

"Bah! Barton Woolfort is afraid of nothing," said the other. "Your father buys my sword for your attendance, and I have drawn it often in your wild frolics, and will do so again, Sir Simon, but I warn you to avoid any man with a front and air like this. Let the girl pass, there are hundreds as fair who will clap their hands with joy to receive your notice."

"No, there are none fairer. I am smitten through the heart by her beauty. At least I will learn her name," said the rash young noble, as he advanced very near Lauretta.

Mortimer Clair instantly placed Flaydilla upon the ground and put himself face to face with Sir Simon, at the same time drawing his sword-hilt farther forward.

He said nothing as he did this, but his eyes flashed sharp defiance with those of Sir Simon. The latter, chafed by Mortimer's bearing, whipped out his sword, saying:

"Bumpkin! do you dare lay your hand on your sword at me?"

"Ay, libertine, and draw it on you as readily," replied Mortimer, as his sword leaped from its sheath, and with a single stroke sent Sir Simon's spinning in the air, greatly to the wonder of that young man.

The clash of steel was to those within hearing like a spark of fire falling upon gunpowder. Instantly the cry of "Swords! A fight!" was raised, and a ring of excited spectators belted in the gentlemen and the two trembling girls.

Sir Simon's sword had flown too far for him to regain it ere it had been trampled upon and broken by the heavy hobnailed brogans of the mob. But his taller and more formidable companion's sword was out and immediately crossed that of Mortimer.

"You may disarm a boy, my black friend," said Sir Barton, tauntingly, as he baffled an attempt of Mortimer's to dash his sword from his grasp, "but not me."

Sir Barton Woolfort, a mere adventurer and bravo, famous for his courage and skill as a brawler, and knighted by Edward IV. for his desperate valour at the battle of Barnet, had been employed by Lord Roger, Earl of Montfort, to attend upon his wild and reckless heir, Sir Simon Vagram, and therefore never failed to stand fairly and squarely in behalf of the young libertine.

As he spoke the above words a sharp thrust of Mortimer's sword tore away his mask of white velvet and revealed his swarthy, war-seasoned visage.

"Take care, young sir!" cried a voice in the ring of spectators. "That is Black Barton you are fighting!"

"Were he the black devil I would not fear him," replied Mortimer, assailing the notorious bully with a skill and resolution which taxed the adventurer's defence sorely.

"He is no pigeon. He aims to kill!" muttered Sir Barton, as he was forced back, inch by inch, before a sword more formidable than any he had ever met in London.

"Gads alive!" cried that same friendly voice. "The young gentleman will pink the court bully. At him, Mortimer!—at him! and by Faustus! into him bravely!" the speaker added, as the sword of the young gentleman beat aside that of Sir Barton, and was thrust clear to the hilt-guards through the throat of the bully.

The wounded man uttered a cry of rage and pain, and fell heavily to the green sward. He was scarcely there when Mortimer's foot was upon his breast, while he reached forward, grasped the collar of Sir Simon, and with astonishing quickness hurled the young baron across the body of Sir Barton ere the latter could struggle to his feet.

In another instant Mortimer tore off the mask from Sir Simon's face, and gazed sternly at him.

It was a fair and handsome face, more suitable to a woman's form than that of a man, yet withal a face full of evil expression, cunning and treachery. It was not a cowardly face either, for the lips and chin were resolute and aggressive in their mould, and the eyes keen and defiant even then, while the sword of Mortimer Clair was at the throat of their owner.

Sir Barton could not rise, as Sir Simon lay across his chest, and the knee of Mortimer was pressing sharply upon the breast of the young baron while the victor said, sternly:

"Ask pardon, Sir Simon, of the lady you presumed to insult, or see the light of day no more."

A glance at the resolute face which frowned upon him, told Sir Simon that the victor was not a man whose threats were to be disregarded. He saw speedy death in the blazing orbs flashing over him, yet he made no appeal for mercy, though his cheek and lips grew deathly pale.

"I defy you! Do you think a Vagram will apologize to a trull?" he cried, glaring hate and defiance as he scowled at his conqueror.

"Liar!" said Mortimer, as he drew back his hand to give force to his intended thrust. "She is purer than the mother who bore you!"

"Do not play him, Mortimer!" exclaimed Lauretta, who had sprung forward and grasped the powerful arm of her lover. "Do not, for my sake! Oh, it is a dreadful thing to take a human life! Spare him!"

"The Earl of Montfort!" shouted some one in the crowd. "Way for the Earl of Montfort!"

Yielding reluctantly to the entreaties of Lauretta, Mortimer withdrew a pace or two from his prostrate antagonists, and turned to confront one whose name and title struck his ear with terrible force.

The earl, conspicuous in his lofty seat upon his coal-black war-steed, erect and formidable in bearing, and scowling angrily as he urged his horse straight through the dense circle of spectators, reined up as he entered the space in the centre of the agitated throng.

His face flushed deeply red as his first glance fell upon the forms of his son and Sir Barton, then in the act of rising from their unpleasant position.

Lauretta and Flaydilla clung to their protector when they saw the scarlet visage of the evil-eyed sorceress looting at them as she stood near the earl, glaring wickedly at them, and eager to pounce upon them as her hapless prey; while the hideous bird of night, perched upon her tangled yellow hair, fanned the bleated cheeks of his mistress with his broad, heavy wings, and rolled his enormous eyes about him with a horrible stare.

"What means this disgraceful scene?" demanded Lord Roger, in a harsh, disagreeable voice, as his deep-set eyes flashed rebuke upon his son and Sir Barton, and, for the moment forgetting the sorceress, "Simon Vagram, what rout is this?"

As he repeated this inquiry, his eyes for the first time fell upon the haughty yet noble face and form of Mortimer Clair, whose dark and steady eyes were fixed earnestly upon his features.

An ashy pallor swept every shade of crimson from the face of the earl, as he stared, open-mouthed, at the young gentleman whose fiery gaze seemed to search and pierce his soul. Lord Roger trembled in his saddle, and he seemed so faint and ill, was so deathly pale, that the sorceress, whose keen eyes were suddenly turned upon him, grasped his iron-gloved hand, and cried warningly:

"Take care, my lord. Beware of the evil eye!"

These words recalled the courage of the earl. His dark face burned with shame and wrath. He drew his sword hastily, and perceiving that his guards had arrived upon the spot, cried out:

"Seize and bind that man! Seize him instantly! Bind and gag him."

"Back!" shouted Mortimer, undaunted by the overwhelming odds so suddenly arrayed against him. "What right has Roger Vagram, Earl de Montfort, to order my arrest?"

His bearing was so bold, his air so noble, his handsome and glowing face so prepossessing, that the guards hesitated, while the people, who hated the Earl de Montfort, began to murmur loudly:

"Ay, why arrest a gentleman who has merely defended his sisters?"

"These proud lords think the people have no rights! He forgets that he is no born noble. Ay, and that had noble Earl Henry lived till now, he'd be plain Simon Roger Vagram, the scrivener! A fig for his nobility!"

The earl glared angrily about him as these cries fell hotly upon his ears, and he was about to repeat his order fiercely when an elderly gentleman, clad in a plain brown garb, but wearing a sword and badge of honour, forced his way to Mortimer's side, while the mob shouted:

"Long live William Caxton! Caxton, the printer!"

William Caxton, for the gentleman was none other than that great pioneer of the press, the first that ever printed a book in England, lifted his hat as a signal for silence, and then addressing the earl, said:

"Be careful, my lord, in ordering the arrest of this gentleman. He stands high in the favour of one whose letter your worship bears in your bosom. I will vouch for his appearance when and where you command. Take care, I say, my lord. He comes from over the sea. Your lordship knows my meaning."

"Three cheers for William Caxton, whose types will light all men in England to liberty of thought!" cried a deep voice from one in the crowd.

Three hearty cheers followed these words, for a mob will shout on every and any opportunity. But the speaker of these words had a deep purpose in view in thus raising the cry of the crowd and making "the welkin ring." He knew that the noise would hurry hundreds of others to the spot, to see and hear, and no doubt to aid in beating down the unpopular earl and his armed followers, should occasion demand.

While the cheers were still shaking the air, he advanced from the mass and stood at the side of Mortimer, in full view of the earl.

"Here am I, Nicholas Flame," he said, as he brandished a formidable club, heavily studded at the end with spikes of iron an inch in length. "Here am I, Nicholas Flame, foreman of the printers, ready to say that Sir Mortimer is as good as any earl I see now!"

With these bold words he stared steadily into the face of Lord Roger and seemed to dare his rage.

The earl recognized this tall and powerful man as one whom he had not seen for many a long year—as one whom he hoped was mouldering in the soil of Flanders—as one who while Henry De Ross, the late Earl De Montfort, lived, was the foster-brother of that nobleman.

He recognized him with a gasp of terror, in which the amazed sorceress greatly shared, for on seeing Nicholas Flame she screened her ugly form and hideous face behind the horse of the nobleman.

Sir Barton Woolfort's wound, though bleeding freely and in the throat, had injured no vital organ, the concussion of the thrust alone having overthrown his athletic frame, but his sword had snapped as he fell, and he was now armed only with a dagger. This, however, he was ready to use—nay, eager to wield; for he was not a man to be easily put down, nor one that ever shrank from an affray.

"Were I in my steel jacket," he muttered, as he glared at Nicholas Flame, "I'd soon scatter this mob of brawling knaves!"

"Mark, Sir Barton," whispered Sir Simon, "how my father stares at the knave with the club. He seems amazed."

Amazed but for a moment, for, rousing himself with a powerful effort, Earl Roger dashed his spurs into the flanks of his horse, and as the animal leaped forward with a mighty bound, raised his sword, shouting:

"Cut down the villain with the club! Guards, obey!"

The sturdy foreman of the printers did not leap aside or attempt to avoid the onset.

His massive club swept through the air with a single rapid sweep, and as it crashed loudly upon the steel plate which guarded the forehead of the steed, both horse and rider fell heavily to the ground as if smitten by a thunderbolt.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE earl fell under his horse, as his feet were entangled in his stirrups, so that one of his thighs was sorely bruised, while he was wholly unable to extricate himself from the weight of his dead charger.

The immense force of the printer's blow, delivered so squarely, had shivered the steel head-plate and crushed in the skull of the steed.

Sir Barton sprang at the printer with upraised dagger, too quickly to allow him a chance to use his club, but the latter received the furious thrust in his left arm, while he tripped up the heels of the knight and hurled him heavily to the earth.

The followers of the earl, armed with partisans and halberds, fearing an overwhelming charge from the mob, closed around their prostrate lord, encircling with military precision both Sir Simon and Sir Barton.

The crowd, now immense and increasing every moment, surged here and there, some eager to attack the guards, others, more prudent, as if eager to prevent strife, but the great mass were panic-stricken and mad to hasten from the spot.

Thus for a short time all was confusion, uproar and terror near the flower-booth, which was overturned and its contents scattered about.



The most daring of the guards, urged on by Sir Simon, attempted to seize Nicholas Flame, but the daring printer, whose formidable weapon seemed as light as a reed in his skillful hand, struck aside the partisans aimed at his broad chest, warded off the halberds striking at his head, and quickly laid low two of the soldiers.

Once he was struck down by a fierce blow delivered by the earl, who had been hastily aided to his feet, but Mortimer defended him until he was again erect.

It was after this act that Mortimer turned to look after Flaydilla and Lauretta, who had become separated from him.

They were nowhere to be seen.

"No doubt they have fled," thought Mortimer, as he sprang upon one of the tables of the destroyed flower-booth, so that he might overlook the crowd.

At first, heedless of the strife going on near him, he darted his glances here and there in anxious search of his tender charge, but his gaze soon rested upon the pale face of little Flaydilla, as she held her arms out towards him while being carried off by the sorceress.

Siballa apparently had just forced her way to the great mass of shouting people, having snatched up the child and hurried away with her.

"Ah, base woman!" cried Mortimer, though the sorceress was far from the sound of his voice, "I see you, and will punish you."

But hundreds of men were closely packed amid the surging mob between him and the retreating sorceress. He saw that long before he could force a passage through the multitude, the hag would escape immediate capture by flying into some hiding place, of which, no doubt she had many.

"Poor Flaydilla," thought he, as tears sprang to his eyes, "she will be cruel to you before I can rescue you."

He now looked anxiously about for Lauretta. Could he catch her glance amid that sea of faces he might reach her.

He looked in vain. Lauretta had disappeared.

"At least the sorceress has not regained her," thought Mortimer. "She is somewhere in the multitude, or may have taken refuge without the enclosure."

But here his leg was grasped by one of the guards, who had forced his way towards the table upon which he stood, and taken by surprise, the young gentleman was dragged to the sword at a great disadvantage.

His conspicuous position had attracted the attention of Earl Roger, who then said to one of the boldest of the guards:

"Capture or slay that gallant in black velvet, and I will give you a hundred pounds."

Stimulated to great effort by the proffered reward, the guard had bent all his energy and skill to attain his object, and as the attention of Nicholas Flame was then demanded by a fierce attack upon himself, Mortimer was surprised and dragged to the ground by the guard, where a fierce struggle began between them for the mastery.

The soldier was a powerful man, a veteran of the dreadful "Wars of the Roses." He anticipated an easy victory over the young gentleman, whom he supposed to be a mere civilian to be crushed in his sinewy grasp. He had him at great advantage, too, for Mortimer fell under him, as both tumbled to the ground at the first grapple.

But the soldier instantly found that though his antagonist was young in years, he was old in strife, and of amazing prowess.

Scarcely a moment had passed, a moment of furious struggle, in which he strove to stab Mortimer, when he was whirled over, and lay flat upon his back, with the knee of his agile enemy upon his breast-plate, the short broad-bladed knife, called the *couteau de grace*, at his throat, seeking to find an entrance through the chinks of his armour.

"Why slay him?" thought Mortimer, who had far more mercy in his noble nature than was often found in the hearts of the warriors of that age. "He is but the slave of Roger Vagram."

"Mercy! Quarter, noble sir!" cried the prostrate soldier, as he shivered with dread of immediate death.

"Pledge your soul that you will serve me even to the death, or I will slay you," repeated Mortimer, whose knife now pricked the throat of his foe.

"I swear it by all the saints, my noble master!"

"Your name?"

"Andrew Tarl."

"And mine is Sir Mortimer Clair. Live, and remember your oath," said Mortimer, rising from him and hurrying to the assistance of Nicholas Flame who was hard pressed by the earl, Sir Simon, and two guards.

As for Sir Barton, he lay, breathing hard, and senseless, upon the grass, the club of the printer having beaten him down.

The eagerness and determination of the earl to slay the printer sprang from no sudden ebullition of rage. It was not because Nicholas Flame had defied him, and slain his good steed. There was a reason far more potent than these why the sturdy printer should be hushed for ever. Earl Roger could not hope to sleep untroubled by dreadful dreams of dire calamity to himself and his fame, so long as Nicholas Flame lived to bear witness against him.

But Flame had been a warrior for many years before he became a votary of "the art preservative of all arts." Nor, while an expert workman in that gentle and peaceful craft, had his sinews lost their pith, nor his hand its skill in wielding weapons of war.

His tall and powerful frame boldly confronted his foes, and his great club was a match for them all, until the hardy earl, infuriated by his successful resistance, snatched a battle-axe from the saddle of his dead charger, and launched it with unerring aim at the head of the printer.

The heavy weapon flew through the air with tremendous force, and though the quick-eyed and nimble-handed Flame caught the missile upon his club, that guard was beaten back against his head, and he staggered to both knees.

"Die, dog!" shouted the earl, as he sprang towards him with uplifted sword.

Then would stout Nicholas Flame have seen the last of earth and sky, had not Mortimer's sword turned aside that of the earl, and prostrated that noble with a blow from the hilt, which Mortimer dealt him fair in the face.

"Lord Stanley! Way for Lord Stanley!" shouted a hundred voices at that moment.

"Now run for it!" cried Flame to Mortimer, as he rose to his feet. "Lord Stanley is the bosom friend of Roger Vagram, and, no doubt, has a strong force with him. Run, my master. The knaves are scattering!"

"I've lost one whom I love better than life," began Mortimer.

But Flame grasped his arm, saying: "Then live to regain her, for you will be slain if Stanley's retainers assail you!"

The multitude were flying in every direction, for the troops of Lord Stanley, having heard that the Earl De Montfort was slain by the people, were charging furiously upon them.

"Lord Stanley may be a warm friend of Roger Vagram now," said Mortimer, as he and Nicholas Flame hastened away, "but I doubt whether he will be after I have had speech with him."

They were soon lost to view in the fugitive multitude, and when the earl was remounted he looked in vain for the objects of his intense rage.

The lately crowded green was almost deserted. Here and there upon the grass lay wounded and groaning men, unhappy victims of the fierce soldiery. The owners of the various booths and stalls, or such as had not fled in the general consternation, trembled and cowered lest the unappeased fury of the malignant earl should be directed against them and their wares.

Although the soldiers were the retainers of Lord Stanley, that nobleman was not with them when they rode into the enclosure, and Earl Roger took it upon himself to command them to ride over the city in search of Nicholas Flame and Mortimer, while he rode around the green, attended by Sir Simon and a few guards, seeking Lauretta.

"You say that you saw the woman in the red gown carrying off a child?" asked Lord Roger of his son.

"I did; and during the affray the girl you mention doubtless took refuge in some of the booths."

"She may have fled through one of the gates, yet we will look into every booth. It appears that you and Sir Barton were following the girl. Why?"

"Her beauty pleased me, my lord. Nothing more. She is very fair. By my life, were she a lady she would be a prize as a wife," exclaimed Sir Simon.

"She need not be so very fair to make an impression upon your heart," said Lord Roger, sneeringly, as he darted an angry glance at his son. "Tis well known, Sir Simon, that you are as quickly attracted by a pretty face as a moth is by a candle. What cares the silly insect whether the flame rises from tallow or perfumed wax? Or what cares silly Sir Simon Vagram whether the pretty face is that of a trull or that of a tilted lady?"

Sir Simon frowned and bit his lip, for his anger easily arose under scorn, and the glance which he cast upon his father had in it more hate than respect.

He made no reply, however, and Lord Roger continued:

"Your reckless folly has resulted in defeating my purpose, which was to gain possession of the flower-girl. No doubt Sir Barton Woolfort curses you and your silliness as he groans. Whither was he carried?"

"To your palace, my lord, but not carried at all, for

he was able to step out right steadily for one who had received such rough usage."

"Ay, he is a tough soldier, as I knew when I selected him to back you in those affrays which will ever meet you, so long as you are so rash. When I rebuked him for not restraining you, he averred that you were uncontrollable."

"True, my lord; the loveliness of the flower girl was irresistible. Have you never seen her?"

"Not since she was an infant. She was with that gallant in black velvet, but I had not time to regard her. If she were a highborn lady—then—Sir Simon, you would gladly wed her?"

"Not I!"

"Ho? What mean you? Did you not say that her beauty was irresistible? That were she a lady she would be a prize as a wife?"

"Very true, my lord, to anyone who wants a wife. I do not. At least, not until I have sowed my wild oats do I desire to put my neck in a yoke. But tell me, my lord, why, as you strove to slay that burly fellow with the club, you bade me aim to kill him."

"Did I? I remember nothing that I said."

"Slay him, Simon," said you, 'or we may be ruined.' Your speech amazed me, my lord. How can a common knave like that ruin a proud earl?"

"Peace! You may learn all too soon," exclaimed Lord Roger, while his face grew dark. "If ever you meet that knave again put your dagger in his ribs, for he knows too much for you and me to live. But here is a toy-booth. Say—my good woman," he added, addressing the trembling owner of the stall, "have you seen aught of a handsome maiden, wearing a black velvet mantle—not a woman's mantle either."

"Such an one ran into the next booth during the affray, my lord," replied the woman, "and I think she is there now. At least, I have not seen her come forth since."

"The next booth! Ah, we will see," said the earl, hastening a few paces, and then halting before a large booth of more capacity and pretensions than its neighbours.

As he reined up, Lauretta came forth from the booth, clinging to the arm of William Caxton, whose care had protected her during the strife and led her, for temporary refuge, into the stall.

She uttered a cry of alarm and drew back hastily as she raised her eyes and recognized Sir Simon by his dress of green and gold.

"Ha! Whom have you there, Mr. Caxton?" demanded the earl, as he gazed keenly at Lauretta.

"It is the beautiful flower girl," whispered Simon, while his eyes sparkled with delight. "Say, is she not a queen in loveliness?"

"My lord," replied William Caxton, respectfully yet coldly, "the maiden asked my protection, and I gave it. I do not know who she is, farther than that she has for a friend him whom your lordship rashly ordered to be arrested."

"You are bold, Master Caxton."

"Not so bold as my lord is rash."

"Then he in black velvet is a very important personage, I suppose," replied the haughty earl, sneeringly. "Come, Master Caxton, you presume too far upon your beautiful calling, thus to address Roger, Earl De Montfort."

"I desire no quarrel, my lord, with you, or any other man, high or low," said Caxton, gravely. "Yet I must say that, had you slain or harmed the knight, there are those sufficiently powerful to harm even your lordship. But let us pass, my lord—"

"Stay! Who is this knight, and why is he so befriended?"

"He is not a mushroom to be trampled upon, my lord, as you may learn ere long. He has important business with your lordship from one not in England, and will, doubtless, call upon you at your palace."

"At my palace! It is well! And if I have been over hasty, I will make amends. So tell him when you see him," cried the earl. "Was he to visit me to-day?"

"To-night, my lord."

"You intend to conduct this maiden to your house, Master Caxton?"

"No, my lord. To the house of the knight's mother."

"He has a mother living, I should be pleased to see her. In what street does she live?" demanded the earl, eagerly.

"She sees no one, my lord," replied Caxton, who now regretted that he had said so much, for he saw that Roger Vagram was greatly agitated; why, he could not divine.

"May I not relieve you, Master Caxton, of the care of the maiden?" asked Sir Simon, whose bold eyes had been steadily regarding the blushing girl.

"Oh, no, dear sir!" exclaimed Lauretta, addressing Master Caxton, in alarm. "Do not forsake me."

"Do not fear, my child," replied Caxton, soothingly.

"My friend Mortimer would be angry with me were

I to leave you until under the protection of his mother."

"With these words, the master printer touched his hat to the earl, and moved away towards the nearest gate of the enclosure.

"She must not escape thus easily," said Lord Roger to his son.

"Then why not seize her before she leaves the green?" asked the impetuous baron.

"Stay! William Caxton is high in the favour of the king, and of him whom we hope to make a king," whispered Lord Roger, as he restrained his reckless son. "Besides, hither rides Lord Stanley, who esteems the surly old printer as a prodigy of genius. Do you hasten to get several tavern rufflers to follow Caxton, and separate the girl from him. Let them pick a quarrel with him, and roll him in the mire; the old knave deserves something rough for his insolence to me. Change your garb and mask your face. Caxton walks slowly. I will see that he is detained at the gate and in the enclosure, until you return with your rufflers."

"If I succeed in carrying off the girl, what then?" "Have her carried to my palace, to the garden entrance. There I will take charge of her. Go."

Sir Simon rode away at a sharp gallop, thinking: "My father has some deep purpose in his mind, which he desires to keep secret from me. What is the girl to him? Perhaps he is smitten with her beauty. I know he is hot-headed still, and it is whispered that old Roger De Montfort has as eager an eye to female charms as any young gallant in all London. What said he? That my folly had spoiled a purpose of his own? Ah, and what was that purpose? No, my lord; if Simon Vagram captures the beauty he will give his prize in your palace, but place her where none but Simon Vagram shall see her."

In a moment after he dashed rapidly through an open gate and disappeared.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

A BERLIN engineer has invented a military land torpedo, which he pretends will blow up a whole battalion.

ALL bright-coloured socks are now pronounced perilous in the extreme. Magenta socks are full of arsenic. Orange socks are full of picric acid. Other socks, again, contain aniline. The chief danger is to those who get hot "when the Thespian sock is on," viz., ballet-dancers, as that soaks the dangerous substance into the skin.

METEOR.—A remarkable meteor was seen in Brighton on Wednesday night at 10 minutes to 12 p.m. It shot towards the south-east, crossed the sky, and, before it disappeared, presented as large a body of light as the moon at its full. Those who saw it describe it as the most remarkable phenomenon they ever witnessed. It was also witnessed in other parts, and it is said by the Paris papers to have illuminated that city for some seconds.

LIFE IN THE SEA.—Two well known naturalists, Dr. Carpenter and Professor Thomson, of Belfast, are engaged in a dredging expedition, to the westward of the Faroe Islands. This will decide the question whether there are living creatures in the deepest parts of the sea. Eminent authorities (the late Professor Edward Forbes among others), have maintained that the pressure at the lower depths was too great to allow of existence being carried on—that there was not sufficient light—and that the water contained too little air.

It has long been contended that steel boilers never could be used, not being sufficiently tenacious. But this theory has been badly damaged by some recent experiments at Pittsburgh, when a steel boiler has withstood the most pressure that could be brought to bear upon it. The boiler is made of two plates of No. 3 steel,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, 6 feet long, and 36 inches in diameter. It has been subjected to several tests, the 10th trial giving it a pressure of 725 pounds to the square inch. Experiments on it continue, but up to this writing no pressure has been able to burst the boiler. It has stretched three inches since the tests commenced.

THE OCEAN BOTTOM.—Mr. Green, the famous diver, tells singular stories of his adventures when making search in the deep water of the ocean. He gave some new sketches of what he saw at the "Silver Bank," near Hayti.—The banks of coral on which my dives were made are about forty miles in length. On this bank of coral is presented to the diver one of the most beautiful and sublime scenes the eye ever beheld. The water varies from ten to one hundred feet in depth, and is so clear that the diver can see from two to three hundred feet, when submerged, with but little obstruction to the

sight. The bottom of the ocean in many places is as smooth as a marble floor: in others it is studded with coral columns, from ten to one hundred feet in height, and from one to eighty feet in diameter. The tops of those more lofty support a myriad of pyramidal pendants, each forming a myriad more, giving reality to the imaginary abode of some water nymph. In other places the pendants form arch after arch, and as the diver stands on the bottom of the ocean and gazes through the deep winding avenues, he finds that they fill him with as sacred an awe as if he were in some old cathedral which had long been buried beneath old ocean's waves. Here and there the coral extends even to the surface of the water, as if the loftier columns were towers belonging to those stately temples that are now in ruins. There were countless varieties of diminutive trees, shrubs, and plants in every crevice of the corals, which were all of a faint hue, owing to the pale light they received, although of every shade, and entirely different from plants that I am familiar with that vegetate upon dry land. One, in particular, attracted my attention: it resembled a sea fan of immense size, of variegated colours, and the most brilliant hue. The fish which inhabit this "Silver Bank" I found as different in kind as the scenery was varied. They were of all forms, colours, and sizes—from the insignificant goby to the globe-like sun-fish; from the dullest hue to the changeable dolphin; from the spots of the leopard to the hues of the sunbeam; from the harmless minnow to the voracious shark. Some had heads like squirrels; others like cats and dogs; some of small size resembled the bull terrier. Some darted through the water like meteors, while others could scarcely be seen to move. To enumerate and explain all the various kinds of fish I beheld while diving on these banks would, were I enough of a naturalist so to do, require more than my limits allow, for I am convinced that most of the kinds of fish which inhabit the tropical seas can be found there. The sun-fish, star-fish, white shark, and blue or shovel-nose shark were often seen. There were also fish which resembled plants, and remained as fixed in their position as a shrub; the only power they possessed was to open and shut when in danger. Some of them resembled the rose when in full bloom, and were of all hues. There were the ribbon-fish, from four or five inches to three feet in length; their eyes are very large, and protrude like those of a frog. Another fish is spotted like a leopard, and from three to ten feet in length. They build their houses like beavers, in which they spawn, and the male or female watches the egg until it hatches. I saw many specimens of the green turtle, some five feet long, which I should think would weigh from 400 to 500 pounds.

### THE EARTHQUAKE TERM.

Our mother earth is passing through one of these periods of convulsion the phenomena of which are among the most terrible of all the manifestations of physical forces. The throbbings of the earth crust, which have extended over so vast an area during the last twelve months, the meteoric shower, and the meteorological phenomena during the same period, are together an interesting subject of study. What mysterious connection exists between these occurrences, if any does exist, or rather the real nature of it, has never been satisfactorily shown; and there is yet, perhaps, room for scepticism upon the hypothesis that the cosmical matter from which the enormous number of meteors periodically rain upon the earth's surface has any direct agency in these disturbances. That the weather and other atmospheric phenomena are influenced by some cause acting in concert with the causes of earthquakes, if not by the same causes, must be admitted. It would be interesting to review in this connection the histories of some of the most remarkable earthquakes on record; we will, however, allude only to one, which destroyed the city of Caracas, in Venezuela, in 1812. The shocks of this earthquake continued at intervals for months previous to the above catastrophe, and were felt with more or less violence from the mouth of the Ohio river to that of the St. Francis. Fissures were opened, lakes disappeared, trees were felled, and such changes produced in the general appearance of the surface, that a tract seventy to eighty miles in length and thirty miles wide, along the Whitewater river and its branches, has ever since been called the "sunk country." The traces of the fissures and chasms produced at that time were visible for years, and were noticed by Flint, the geographer, seven years after their occurrence, and Lyell, the geologist, as late as 1846. Such were the effects of this convulsion.

Throughout Mexico and Central America they were still more remarkable, increasing in intensity as they extended further south, finally terminating with the destruction of Caracas, which involved the almost instantaneous death of 12,000 people. The

atmospheric phenomena during the period preceding the final great convulsion were exceedingly peculiar. Electrical discharges from an apparently cloudless sky were frequent. Vivid auroral displays were more than ordinarily common. At New Madrid, below St. Louis, the inhabitants were at one time surprised and alarmed by the appearance of the sky, which, although cloudless, presented along the western horizon a most brilliant electrical display. A continued glare of most vivid lightning, accompanied by what was at the time supposed to be incessant thunder, appeared to proceed from below the horizon, and coupled with the preceding alarming events, produced great terror in the minds of the people.

The present season has presented great climatic peculiarities. From all parts of the world come accounts of hurricanes, floods, unusual vagaries of temperature, and prevalence of winds from unusual quarters. The heat and drouth experienced in England have been extraordinary. The southerly winds have prevailed for an unusually long interval, and the weather has consequently been very hot and very dry.

The peculiarities of our climate during the last twelve months have attracted much attention. Both extreme cold and heat have been experienced, and these extremes have continued for extraordinary periods, while we have had unusual storms of wind and rain. All this indicates unusual atmospheric disturbances. Overhead and underfoot the elements are warring with terrific energy. The recent eruption of Vesuvius, the earthquakes in the West Indies and the Sandwich Islands, the meteoric fall of 1866 and 1867, the alleged shifting of the Gulf Stream nearer to the eastern continent, and above all, the accounts just received of the disastrous earthquake in southern Peru and Ecuador, exceeded in destructive effect by only two similar events on records, constitute a series of remarkable occurrences which may not perhaps be rashly regarded as the commencement of an epoch of permanent physical and climatic change to which the earth is destined. Some will see in these events the fulfilment of prophecy, and the indications of moral and political changes not less momentous.

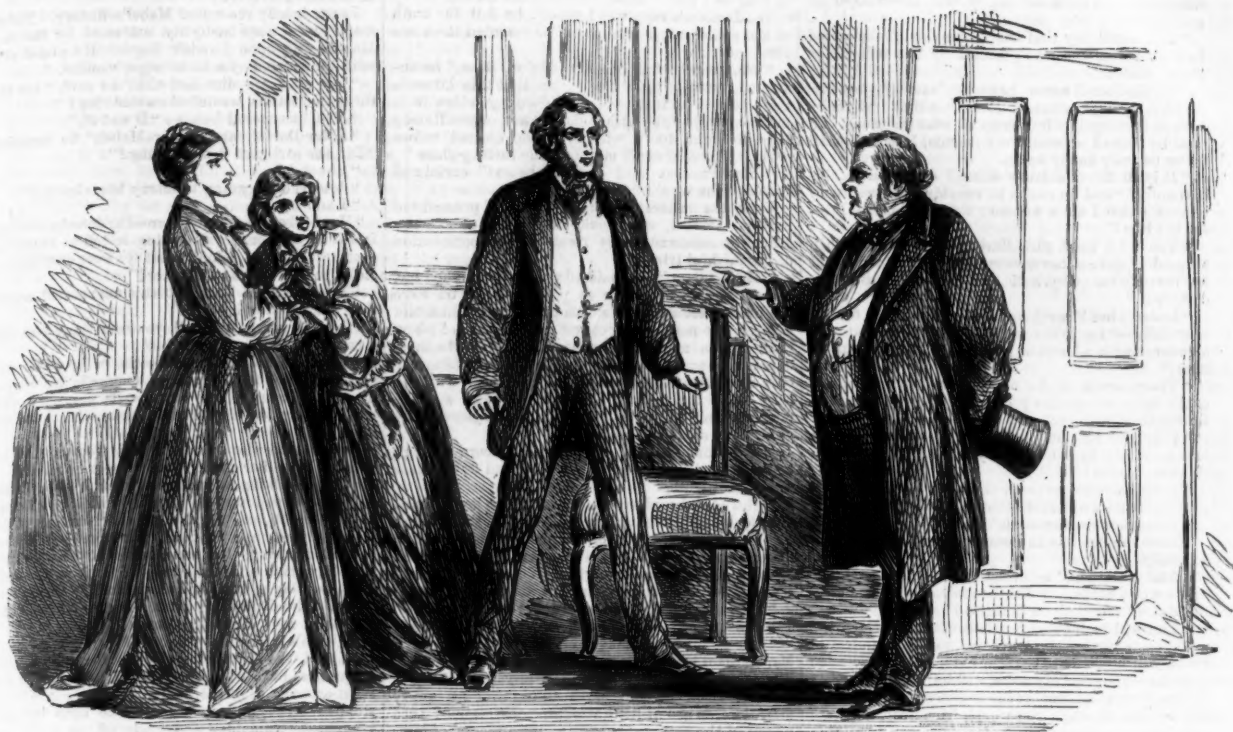
The causes which produce the grand and terrible phenomena of earthquakes are doubtless various. The generation of gases by chemical reaction, and the development of enormous volumes of superheated steam, by the contact of water with the intensely heated interior of the earth, are without doubt the most common and potent. The distance below the surface at which these forces act, although undoubtedly great, is unknown. The sensations produced upon people by earthquake shocks have peculiarities which must be felt to be realized, as it is impossible to give any adequate description of them.

The most graphic description we have ever heard was given to us by a gentleman who has experienced several of these occurrences both at sea and on land. The sensation at sea, he says, is often described as resembling the shock produced by a ship striking upon a reef, but there is a feeling of something different, a sort of instinct of something farther away and more powerful, which accompanies the first feeling of surprise and alarm, a sort of mysterious pulsation through the water, which once experienced is not easily forgotten. On land he describes it as being like what would be the feeling of a person standing upon a flexible, buoyant substance, like an immense tarpaulin, spread over the surface of a liquid mass in a state of violent agitation. The undulations succeed each other so rapidly and irregularly that it is impossible to time one's steps to meet them, persons are suddenly and violently prostrated; while the mysterious subterranean noises, the peculiar appearance of the sky and atmosphere, the universal alarm of all living things, conspire to produce the most appalling spectacle that the imagination can conceive.

The accounts received from Ecuador and Peru indicate a disaster of almost unparalleled extent, and the misery which must inevitably result will appeal to the sympathy and the charity of the entire civilized world. Whether it will prove the grand finale of the present earthquake term, or whether other disasters are to follow, no mortal can say. Time only can determine this, but we trust that the giant forces which have produced such wide-spread devastation and death have expended their energies, and the earth may again "rest for a season."

RESTORATION OF CHRISTCHURCH, NEWGATE STREET.—This fine structure, which was commenced in 1687 and completed in 1704, from the designs of Sir Christopher Wren, is now undergoing a thorough reparation of the exterior, in a very satisfactory manner, and a new east centre window of an effective character will shortly be placed in the sacred edifice.





[LUDLAM'S WARM RECEPTION.]

## WHO DID IT?

## CHAPTER II.

THE inquest was held and the coroner's verdict was, that Mrs. Cogswell received her death at the hands of some person unknown, but that suspicion strongly pointed to her adopted daughter, Mabel Cogswell, *alias* Denison, as that person. Mabel was at once arrested and conveyed before the magistrate, to be examined upon this charge. This man was Matthew Golden, whose head was white with the snows of nearly seventy years. He had outlived passion and prejudice. He was the wealthiest man in the village and was universally respected. No one doubted for a moment but that the murderess, as she was now almost generally believed to be, would receive justice at his hands.

Mabel had recovered in a measure from the wild fright and stupor that had seized upon her when first accused. This was mainly owing to the fact that she found herself supported by two staunch friends, Lewis Waller and the old lawyer, Josiah Littleton.

The room where the court was held was thronged with people; never had any event created so much excitement in Westbrook before. The witnesses examined were Molly Bates, Richard Ludlam, John Deering (who had returned), Mr. Littleton, and two friends of Ludlam's—whose names it is unnecessary to mention, as their evidence was but a corroboration of Ludlam's. The handkerchief and bracelets were produced. Lewis Waller was ready to witness that he had given her the handkerchief, but as she did not deny it, his evidence was not considered necessary.

Molly Bates was called upon first, but her evidence amounted to nothing more than that she had been summoned from her household duties, and told by Mabel that Mrs. Cogswell was dead, and to go and call some of the neighbours. She had hurried to the nearest house, and then to Mr. Ludlam's. She was positive that she had locked the front door, as she always did, before retiring to rest. Had she seen any suspicious person lurking about the grounds? She had not.

Richard Ludlam testified to what the reader already knows: John Deering to the pleasant relation always existing between the accused and the deceased; Mr. Littleton to the fact that he had drawn up a will in Mabel's favour. Then Mabel told a plain straightforward story which no amount of cross-questioning could shake. The same question was put to her—had she seen any suspicious person in the grounds? The thought of the old

beggar flashed through her mind, and she answered "yes." She described his sudden appearance and uncouth figure. This answer caused an excitement among the listeners; but when she said that Lewis Waller was with her at the time, and he, being called upon, corroborated her words, the interest increased.

Mr. Golden's face, which had worn a look of sad perplexity during the examination, brightened at this evidence, and he seemed to see his way more clearly. Strangely enough, however, no one else had seen this vagrant; and yet this was not surprising either, as Mrs. Cogswell's house was in the outskirts of the village, and the man might have avoided passing the centre of the place—supposing him to have had a sinister motive—by turning off into a by-road through the woods. There were many, however, who thought this beggar never had an existence, but that Lewis Waller had perjured himself to save his affianced wife. They were hardly prepared, however, for the worthy magistrate's decision.

"Mabel Denison, commonly known as Mabel Cogswell," he said, "you solemnly affirm that you are innocent of this charge?"

"As heaven is my judge!" answered Mabel, unhesitatingly.

"I believe you," he responded; "and, in the absence of sufficient evidence against you, I cannot hold you to the charge. The death of your benefactress is one of those mysteries of crime which time only can unravel. I shall spare no means in the attempt to find the true criminal. The motive is certainly wanting in your case. I am not such a believer in moral depravity as to think a young girl, who has grown up from childhood amongst us with the best of characters, could, in a single night, become a fiend thirsting for the blood of her best friend—indeed, her mother! The accusation falls to the ground—you are free."

One would have thought an universal shout would have burst from the lips of all present; but it was not so—the majority of the spectators had made up their minds that she was guilty. They expected to see her sent for trial, and they were disappointed; and when people are disappointed, they are displeased. Though the law exonerated her, a moral sentence was passed upon her. She was considered guilty, although it could not be proved. The beggar was an ingenious myth to bring her off. Mr. Littleton knew what he was about; he wanted his fee. Everybody knows what lawyers are. Ludlam was very busy in fomenting this opinion against Mabel. As the nearest of kin, he took upon himself

the direction of the funeral, and would not allow her to attend. She had no claims upon the deceased, he said.

Mabel was not fond of strife; she left Elm Cottage, and took up her residence with Lewis Waller and his sister Sarah, who resided in a small dwelling on the other side of the village, though both Mr. Littleton and John Deering strenuously urged her to remain.

"No," she had said; "Mr. Ludlam thinks I murdered my benefactress to obtain her wealth. Let him take it—he is welcome to it."

"He'll never get it," replied Littleton, rather energetically for him. "And don't, please, make any such observation as that again, especially before witnesses. However, you can't give it away until you are put in possession—that's one comfort; and by that time, I think, you will not have such liberal views with regard to Mr. Ludlam."

As executor, Josiah Littleton took possession of the property of the deceased. Meeting Richard Ludlam in the street, that gentleman turned sharply upon him.

"See here, Littleton," he cried, "I shall contest that will. The old woman was never in her right senses when she made it."

Mr. Littleton took a pinch of snuff deliberately.

"As sane as you or I," he answered.

"No matter; I shall contest it, for all that," retorted Ludlam, hotly.

"Of course you can do as you please," returned the lawyer, with taunting pleasantry.

"Perhaps you have heard. 'Those who dance must pay the fiddler!' Good morning, sir."

Richard Ludlam choked down his wrath—there was no use in getting angry with old Mr. Littleton. A great many people in the village had tried it, and lost money by it. But there was an object on whom he could vent his anger with impunity, and he was determined to make him feel the full force of it. With this determination he walked towards the unpretentious cottage that now sheltered Mabel.

Lewis Waller had wished Mabel to become his wife at once, and give him the right to protect her; but she would not wed under that cloud of shame, for the averted looks of those who had once greeted her so kindly had sunk deep within her heart, depressing her spirits, and casting a chill upon her life.

"Your innocence will be thoroughly proved some day, Mabel," he said, assuringly.

"You are so kind to me," she murmured, gratefully. "My heart is too full to thank you, for you have sheltered and protected me when all con-

demned; you have taken to your hearth the wretched wanderer; and made her happy, who never hoped to smile again."

"It is a dull day that has no sunshine," exclaimed Lewis's sister, who was present. "You will yet be happy, Mabel."

"Sarah, I shall never have the same joyous disposition again," returned Mabel, sadly. "I have been thought guilty by nearly all who knew me. Ill used by those I esteemed my friends, I fear I shall never be truly happy again."

"It is all Mr. Ludlam's doing," cried Sarah, indignantly, "and he ought to consider himself very fortunate that I am a woman; were I a man—I'd—I'd kill him!"

"You are a good girl, Sarah," responded Mabel, amused in spite of her sorrow at this outburst; "but he loved Mrs. Cogswell and would punish her destroyer."

"Loved her!" rejoined the excitable Sarah, scornfully—"he loves her gold better—a miserly slanderer with a heart of lead—oh, if I were only a man!"

"There seems to be no one on whom suspicion could light, except this poor old beggar," remarked Lewis, thoughtfully.

"Why not Mr. Ludlam?" cried Sarah; "he was just as likely to do it as anybody else. Don't you think so, Mabel?"

"I can accuse no one, Sarah," she answered, gently; "and we should be cautious how we suspect, lest we accuse the innocent."

"Time, Mabel, works strange things," said Lewis, hopefully.

"And till then," returned Mabel, despondently, "I must be a burden—a disgrace to you, who love me."

"Mabel, how can you think so?"

"You will be blamed for sheltering one whom the world casts forth," she continued, in the same strain. "You will be made to bear the evils which they heap upon me—you, for my sake, will be hated, Lewis? But no, you shall not suffer on my account—no, I will wander through the world, friendless, hopeless—and in some distant spot, far, far away from this place, seek a refuge where I may die, as my mother did, and the green turf that covers me be known but as the stranger's grave."

These sad words brought the tears into sympathetic Sarah's eyes.

"Mabel, don't talk so—don't!" she said.

There was a knock at the door, Lewis opened it, and, to the great surprise of them all, Richard Ludlam entered. Sarah looked at him as if he had been a wolf in the lambfold—as indeed in many senses he was—and wondered what he wanted there.

"You are in good company, my friends," remarked Ludlam, glancing disdainfully at Mabel.

"We were," responded Sarah, covertly.

Her woman's spirit was instantly up in arms, for she knew he meant mischief, she could see it in his eye.

"So, Miss Mabel," continued Ludlam, pointedly, "you have a better lodging than a jail."

"A better one than your conscience," cried Sarah, who was somewhat celebrated for a liberal use of her tongue. "You starved it, and it has gone begging ever since."

This retort was unheeded by Ludlam; he was too wise to bandy words with an angry woman.

"I heard the good people of this cottage had received a very honest companion," he continued, composedly.

"You need not have had very good ears for that," responded the irate Sarah. "The whole village knows it."

"And is shamed by it," rejoined Ludlam, sharply; "and if you do not send her from your dwelling, you must quit my employ, Lewis."

"He can't do better," retorted Sarah; "he's sure to benefit by a change of company."

"I knew this would be the end," exclaimed Mabel, sorrowfully; "but you shall not suffer through me. I will go at once."

She made a movement as if to leave the cottage, but Lewis laid his hand upon her arm, and gently restrained her.

"Mabel, do not stir," he said. His voice was calm, but his honest indignation, thoroughly aroused, blazed in his dark, hazel eyes. "Let him work his spite, I fear him not, and to his teeth I tell him he is a villain!"

"Lewis, you will anger him," cried Mabel, apprehensively.

"Rogues and I are always on bad terms," continued Lewis, undauntedly. "Mr. Ludlam, a few words for contemplation. He who would oppress an innocent and unoffending girl to obtain her wealth—for it is plainly to be seen that is your aim—is a villain of too deep a dye to be called man, though he may wear the form of one; his right name is—devil!"

"Lewis, you are my own brother, and I'll love you as long as I live!" cried the delighted Sarah.

Mr. Ludlam's rage was intense; he felt the truth of the young man's words, and he resented them accordingly.

"Fine words, but beggars deal in them," he answered, scornfully. "You forget that this house is mine; that I let it to you furnished; you live in it but at my pleasure—either discard her, or you'll sleep hard to-night, for I will have you ejected before dark. The cold earth may be your resting-place."

"That's not so hard as your heart!" exclaimed Sarah. She would have her say.

Even the mildest nature will turn if pressed too hard. Mabel, who would have borne almost any hardship uncomplainingly resented this persecution of her faithful friends.

"Mr. Ludlam," she said, "you have pursued me, a weak girl, like a thing to prey upon. You were the first to accuse me of a dreadful act, you set a blot against my name, and called me a murderess! You have driven me from my friends, and made them curse me! and now you would force me from the only roof that shelters me. I will tell you why you have done this. Mrs. Cogswell is dead, and the poor orphan girl is the only bar between you and her gold. Oh, shame! shame!"

Mr. Ludlam smiled in pretended scorn, though convulsed with passion, as he swallowed down these unpleasant truths.

"You have heard my determination," he rejoined, shortly, as he turned on his heel, and left the cottage.

"Evil go with him," exclaimed Sarah, who had never stood in much awe of her brother's employer. "Mabel, look up and laugh. We will all starve together—I like company when I am dull."

"And this for my sake—never!" responded Mabel.

"What nonsense you talk, Sarah," cried Lewis. "There is not much danger of our starving, even if Mr. Ludlam has discharged me. I fancy I can find other employment. Nor is there any probability of our resting on the cold earth to-night. An angry man's words are of little weight. He cannot turn us out of the cottage without a due process of law; and, with the aid of Mr. Littleton—who is a great friend of yours, Mabel—we could worry him for a month or so; time enough to procure another house. You are altogether too despondent, and take too sombre a view of matters, Mabel. Elm Cottage would afford you shelter at any time. I know your sensitive nature revolts at making it your home while this mystery of your benefactress's death remains unsolved. Give over vain repinings. I have loved you from childhood; in my dreams I have linked my fate with yours, and whatever it may be we will meet it together. We have one heart, we will have one path, let it lead to good or evil. I have some friends in the village, and they will help me."

Mabel smiled upon him through her tears. It was a great consolation to her in her hour of trial to have this faithful heart to lean upon. They were disturbed by a sudden and loud knocking at the door, and the girls thought Mr. Ludlam was about to put his threat into execution, but Lewis, who had no such fear, went to the door, and found Jim Upton, who drove the mail between Westbrook and Hadley.

"What is it, Jim?" he asked.

"An accident, Lewis," said the driver. "Coming down the hill, just at the curve of the road, I ran over an old man. My horse was going pretty fast, and I did not see him until I was just upon him. I cried out, but he jumped the wrong way just under the horse's nose. I'm afraid he's badly hurt. I tried to lift him into the waggon; but he said he was broken all to bits and wanted me to go for a doctor. I thought of you—you know all about medicine—and you were pretty near, so I thought I would come for you."

"Where is he now?"

"Just in the bend of the road yonder. I got him on the grass by the roadside, but he groaned dreadfully. Jump on my team and we'll go to him."

Lewis got his hat and accompanied Jim to the place. The injured man looked more like a bundle of rage than a living being. Lewis knelt beside him and raised his head. With a wild throb of excitement he saw the face of the old beggar—that face once seen was not easily forgotten. The injured man's eyes feebly opened, and he clutched eagerly at Lewis with his bony fingers. The recognition was mutual.

"You're the fellow I saw with the girl?" he cried, eagerly.

"I am," answered Lewis, tremulously.

"They took her up for murdering the old woman. I heard 'em read it in the paper," he went on in a dreamy sort of way, "and her name was Mabel Denison. What did they do to her?"

"Nothing. She was discharged from custody, but the belief still exists that she is guilty."

"Does it? And her name was Mabel Denison? How came she there?"

Lewis briefly recounted Mabel's history. The old man's eyes were suddenly attracted by the ring, Mabel's gift, upon Lewis's finger. He glared at it with his bleared eyes in an eager manner.

"My eyes are dim and old," he said, "but aint there two letters scratched on that ring?"

"Yes," answered Lewis; "D and M."

"D for Daniel, and M for Mabel," he mumbled. "Did the girl give you that ring?"

"She did."

"And you are going to marry her, aint ye?"

"I am."

"Hush—bend down your ear—I'm done for, for I can feel it in my bones. I'm going to tell ye something—something that I don't want ye ever to tell, especially to her—she's my darter!"

The surprise of Lewis at this unexpected revelation was great indeed.

"Now, I'm going to tell you something else, that I want you to tell everybody."

"Come here, Jim," cried Lewis, to the driver, who was trying to make a litter of boughs in his waggon for the old man to rest on. Lewis suspected what was coming, and wanted another witness besides himself.

"It was me who killed the old woman," said he, "and I have her money and jewels about me. I heard you talking about them when I stood listening by the window, before you saw me; so I came back at night, and climbed up the verandah, on the trellis, to the girl's window; the moon was shining and made things light in the room. I was afraid the old woman might awake, so I took a handkerchief that lay on the bureau, intending to use it as a gag. She did awake at the noise of my forcing the closet door, and called out:

"Who's there?"

"I tied the handkerchief over her mouth to silence her, but she slipped it off, and I gave it a twist around her throat, and kept twisting it until she stopped struggling; then I broke open the box, secured the valuables, and made off, as guilty as I came. I was coming back to save the girl, when this accident happened; it's as well though, for it will save me from being hanged, which everybody always said I'd come to."

This speech quite exhausted the old man, and he sank back lifeless. Lewis thought he was dead, but placing his hand over his heart found that it still continued to beat. In this insensible condition they placed him in the waggon and drove to the doctor's house. His wounds were beyond surgery, as he was injured internally.

The minister and the magistrate, Mr. Golden, were sent for, and in their presence he repeated his confession. He died that night. Lewis charged himself with the expense of the funeral. He had called himself Daniel, and Lewis Waller buried in his own breast the secret that his true name was Daniel Denison—not even to Mabel did he reveal it. Why oppress her mind with the knowledge that her father was a murderer?

Mabel was put in possession of the Elm cottage property without cavil, and she transferred it, and herself, shortly after to Lewis Waller. Mr. Littleton gave away the bride, and was jolly on the occasion. Sarah was bridesmaid. Indeed they had quite an ovation over it, as every one of any consequence in the village was present.

It is almost unnecessary to say that Richard Ludlam was not there. Westbrook suddenly became distasteful to him. He sold his business to Lewis—who was more liberal than he had any reason to expect—and removed to other parts. His society was never missed.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Waller still reside at the Elm Cottage, and are respected by all who know them.

G. L. A.

## FLORIAN.

### CHAPTER V.

THE fairy form moved on a few paces, and then stopped again, this time looking up with an eager expression that sent the rich colour to her cheeks and temples, while a new and meaning light beamed in her beautiful eyes.

Hark! What heavenly music thrills the air, and lends power to the enchantment that holds the youth by its entrancing spell?

"Florian have a care. They will set thee to thine own against thee on the morrow. Oh, throw not a chance away. Electa will be where she can see, and be sure her prayers shall ascend in thy behalf!"

Florian would have spoken in reply, but he was too late. Ere the spell had left him so that he could control his speech, the lovely presence had glided



across the way, and disappeared within the sable depths of one of the low-vaulted passages. He dared not follow, he would not had he dared; but for a long time he stood and gazed upon the vacant spot which had erst been filled by the presence of the most beautiful thing of earth his eyes had ever rested upon. It was the same vision he had once seen while hunting upon the mountain, and which he had borne in memory ever since—the vision which had had much to do with his seeking the society of the banditti—but if it had appeared lovely to him before, how much more lovely did it appear now, when brought so closely to view, in contrast with the dark relief afforded by the grim walls of the cavern. And the damsel had spoken to him—had spoken as though she felt more than a passing interest in his welfare. What was she? Who was she? That she belonged not to the robber brood he felt very sure. He had been sure of that from the time when he first met her upon the mountain.

At length Florian advanced to the table, lighted one of the lamps, and then repaired to his chamber, where he threw himself upon his couch. But he could not sleep. He thought of Electa; and he thought of the words she had spoken unto him. He had no thought that the chieftain had willingly sought to deceive him. If he were really the man who was to oppose him on the morrow, he had been elected to his place by his followers without his knowledge or consent. And would he consent when he came to know what had been done? That remained to be seen.

An hour, or more, the youth lay upon his uneasy couch, and then he resolved to arise and seek tranquillity in the fresh air. As he passed out into the main cavern, he saw Corinna standing by the table; and having assured himself that no one else was near, he approached and addressed her. She did not start at his coming, nor did she offer to withdraw; but Florian fancied he could detect an expression of thankfulness in her face, as though she was glad he had come. In short, might not she have been waiting for him?

The young man spoke of the ordeal through which he had passed, and the woman, with genial smiles, complimented him upon his success. And now, as he came to have a closer view of her face, he saw that she was still handsome. Her skin was pure, and her features, though somewhat sharpened, yet bore the traces of beauty so strongly, that it seemed to require only the aid of joy and comfort to impart to them the flush and freshness of youth. By this closer view Florian could see that not the hand of time alone had set the seal of decay upon her youthful grace and comeliness. There had been much sorrow in her cup of life, and there were times when the shadows deepened upon her thin, pale face, until it seemed as though she had drained the bitterness to the very dregs. She bore a secret in her bosom—a secret that stung her at times, and gave her most poignant agony. Florian could not be mistaken. He saw it plainly, and he wondered if he should ever know what it was.

"Corinna," said the youth, emboldened to the speech by the freedom with which the woman had addressed him, "there is a maiden with Bayard's troop named Electa."

A sudden tremour shook Corinna's frame, and a flash of strange light blazed in her large, dark eyes. She cast a quick, furtive glance around, and then asked:

"What know you of Electa?"

"I met her once on the mountain, when I was upon a hunting expedition, and I have since learned that her name is Electa."

"And have you seen her since?"

"I will be frank with you, Corinna. I think I saw her cross this very cavern not two hours ago."

With an effort—an effort so strong that it was readily apparent—the woman put back the strange emotion that had shaken her frame, and finally said:

"Electa is with us. She is the daughter of Timon and Thalia."

"The daughter of Timon?" cried Florian, with sudden pain.

"So he claims her."

"But it cannot be. Oh! she is not the child of that man! Do you believe it?"

Again the woman cast a searching glance around the cavern, and, in a whisper, she replied:

"It matters not what I believe. Electa is called their child, and she knows no other parentage."

Florian bowed his head in thought, and as he stood thus he felt the woman's hand upon his arm clutching him with nervous force. He looked into her face, and saw that the old fire was blazing in her eyes again, only this time the light was deeper and more earnest.

"Sir Florian," she whispered, convulsively, "tell me truly—as you value your life, tell me—was it Electa that brought you hither?"

The youth was startled, and knew not what to reply.

"Fear not to trust me," she went on, with increasing eagerness. "If you tell me the truth, it may be better for you—it may be better for Electa. Was it her fair face that attracted you to this rough life?"

Florian felt that he could trust this woman. Something whispered to him that he had best do so; and under the guidance of that impulse, he replied:

"Corinna, you have guessed the truth. It was not wholly that—not wholly that—other influences—powerful ones—operated upon me to this end; but I confess that had it not been for that sweet face I might never have sought the banditti of these mountains."

"Enough!—enough!" cried Corinna, still holding the youth by the arm. "Your secret is safe with me; but beware of all others. As you value your life, beware of Bayard! Look to me for aid when you need it; look to me for counsel; but beware of the dark chieftain! Should Bayard suspect—Ha! I hear his step. Get thee gone, and remember the words I have spoken. Gather all your strength for the morrow, for be sure you will need it. Hush! Not a word! Away! There is time if you but improve it."

#### CHAPTER VI.

FLORIAN had listened attentively, but he heard no step; yet he obeyed the woman's command, and as he stopped at the entrance to his chamber he heard Bayard's voice very plainly. How had Corinna detected his coming so quickly?

Aye—how? The thought led our hero into a train of reflection which gave him much light; and in the end he fancied he could account for Corinna's strange behaviour. And thus his reflections led him on:—In past years, when Corinna had been young and fair, Bayard had loved her, and she had given to him the whole wealth of her heart. And Corinna loved still—loved deeply and passionately—and Bayard's coldness had made her miserable, and stamped her suffering upon her face. And now she had new cause of anguish. Her faithless lover had bestowed his affections upon another—upon a younger and more beautiful being.

"Aye," murmured Florian, giving words to his thoughts, "the stout chieftain loves Electa, and doubtless seeks to win her to himself; and may not Timon favour his suit? Does he not hope to gain some new power by thus catering to the passion of his chieftain? Aye—and is it not plain to be seen why Timon fears me? Does he not suspect that I shall become a barrier in his way? Evidently his very first instinct upon beholding me was, 'Here is a youth who will love Electa?'"

And then our hero continued to wonder if the beautiful maiden would return his love. It was not a weakness of self-praise—not an over-abundance of self-esteem—that led him to hope and believe that Electa would love him. He did not believe that she felt at home with the robber-band, or that she would willingly unite herself with one whose hands were dark with crime. Hope was strong within him, and many a glowing picture of joy and bliss did he fashion from his thickly-crowding fancies.

But anon, with chilling influence, came back the repeated words of Corinna: "Beware of Bayard?" Surely, there was a power not to be despised. How should he seek Electa's companionship without the chieftain's knowledge? And if the chieftain should suspect his love for the priceless jewel, what would be the result? Such men as Bayard were apt to love with a passion that brooks no rival—a passion as deadly and fatal in jealousy as it is strong and deep in the sunshine of prosperity.

But first, thought Florian, let me know that Electa loves me; and then we can plan for the future. In Corinna I have a sympathising friend. She, most surely, would have me bear the maiden away; and her help may be above all other things in value to me.

At length our adventurer slept, and his dreams were as strange and varied as had been the events and the reflections of the day and the evening. But he slept well, nevertheless; and when he awoke he found that the day had dawned. When he arose he found water at the entrance of his chamber, with dry napkins; and having bathed himself, he dressed, and went forth into the main cavern, where he met the bandit chief. A longer table than that at which he had eaten had been set, and he could see that man had been there breaking their fast,—not only this, but at the entrance he saw Timon, and several others, who had evidently but just left their leader.

Bayard greeted the neophyte in a friendly manner, though there was lacking that warmth which had characterized his greetings theretofore.

"We have eaten our breakfast before you," the chieftain said; "because there were preparations to

be made in which Timon was interested; and I did not disturb you for the reason that you were likely to require all your strength, and to that end good sleep is a valuable agent."

After awhile Florian took his seat at the table, and while he ate, the chieftain was busy with his own affairs; but when he had finished his meal, Bayard rejoined him.

"Sir Florian, I gave you to understand yesterday, that I would not appear against you in the trial of to-day; but my men have decided otherwise. It is the wish of all that I should be your antagonist, and I cannot properly refuse."

"Good Bayard," returned the youth, with a pleasant smile, "your words have made true a dream which came to me during the night. I dreamed that a friendly spirit appeared to me, and bade me gird up my loins for a severe trial, for Bayard himself was to be my opponent."

"And you are satisfied?" said the chieftain.

"How can I be otherwise," responded Florian. "I expected to be placed against one of your best men; and now it is to be yourself, I have this reflection to comfort me, 'there can be no dishonour in defeat at the hands of Bayard.'"

The chieftain accepted the compliment with a gracious inclination of the head; and it was very plainly to be seen in the expression of his swarthy features, that he held the prowess of his selected antagonist in no high esteem; that is, he held it lightly in comparison with his own; for he seemed to look down upon the youth with compassion, and had his thoughts been expressed in words, they would have found verbal clothing something after this fashion: "How much forbearance shall I grant to this fellow's youth and inexperience?"

Florian saw it all, and in his soul he was determined that not a chance, or the slightest shadow of a chance, should be thrown away.

"Touching the weapons," said Bayard, after other matters had been discussed, "you can select from my stock any sword that may suit your fancy."

"I think my own sword will answer," replied Florian.

"A good blade, doubtless," added Bayard; "but, I thought, rather light for earnest work, where heavy blows may be given and taken."

The youth smiled a quiet, meaning smile as he answered to this:

"Years ago, an envoy from the king of Damascus visited the court of Syracuse—it was before the Roman rule, when Claudius was ruler—and while there he fell ill and died. Glaucus cared for him during his last hours, and in token of his deep gratitude he gave to Glaucus his sword. Glaucus, dying in his turn, left the sword to his son. The weapon was held in high esteem on account of the rare jewels in the hilt, and the virgin purity of its golden scabbard; but none had as yet thoroughly tested the nature of the blade. The son of Glaucus, when our last grand festival was held in the Julian Amphitheatre, offered this sword as a prize to him who should come off victor in the use of that particular weapon. The prize was awarded to me. At first I held the sword in esteem for its marvellous richness. I had expected to find rust upon the blade; but not so. It was as bright and pure as when first it came from the hands of the maker, and I quickly determined that I had gained possession of one of those wondrous blades, for which Damascus had become famous; and upon trial I found it so. The common Roman blade I can hew and hack as though it were of wood. And then I am used to the weight and balance of the weapon."

"Good!" cried the chieftain, who had listened with much interest to the story. "We shall now have opportunity to put your sword to its severest test."

"Not only my sword," suggested Florian; "but myself as well."

"We shall see."

Later in the forenoon, when the sun had crept up so as to dart its rays into the deeper ravines of the mountain, the banditti were assembled in a narrow vale, from which, on either hand, the banks sloped up in regular places, affording convenient space for the accommodation of those who had gathered to witness the trial that was to take place. There were three-score men, at least, in the vale, and by the time they had taken their seats upon the grassy banks, Bayard and Florian appeared upon the scene, each bearing a sword and buckler; and as the preliminaries had been all arranged, they were very soon ready for the conflict.

The rules, as laid down, and agreed to by both, were as follows: They entered the list with friendly feelings, and in that same spirit the combat was to be conducted as far as possible. Either party had the privilege of crying for quarter at any moment, and upon such demand the conflict was to cease. No blow should be stricken upon a man who was pro-

trate; nor should a man upon his knees make a thrust of any kind. A man might be twice disarmed and yet call for a new weapon; but should he be disarmed the third time, he was to be pronounced vanquished. Farther than this, they were to fight as they pleased; and if a man chose to die rather than ask for a cessation of hostilities, he was to be held alone to blame.

There had been thought to be a great disparity between the two men; but as they now came together it was seen that there was not so much difference, after all. Bayard was a trifle taller, and somewhat heavier of frame; but at those points where lay the active muscles—at the shoulders; the breast; the width of the back; and the rounding of the loins and the hips, the careful observer saw that the youth was fully equal to his opponent. In fact, the bandit chieftain's bulk could be of no earthly use to him in the contest that was to come, for it was only an additional weight of flesh to be supported under trial.

One old robber, who had long been a keen observer of nature's handiwork, touched his companion upon the elbow, and whispered to him:

"Ye gods, Dardinel, I am astonished. Do you mark the youth's arm? See where it swells upon the inner side, below the elbow. There's where he finds a grip that must be wonderful. And look at the arm above. See how it rolls up between the elbow and the shoulder. By the life of me, but it is more like a bundle of tough cords than is Bayard's. And do you notice the marvellous swelling of the young man's bosom? Look upon those two breasts, where the flesh rises in great ridges, and looks hard and solid. My soul! What a blow he can strike! And there is one thing more, Dardinel. If this Florian is in proper trim from much exercise, his youth will help him. Ah, those mistake most sadly who fancy that middle-age can stand before stalwart youth. I mean, of course, where other things are equal."

Ay—in his ordinary garb, moving about with stern and stately tread, the bandit chief had looked huge and massive by the side of the modest, retiring youth; but now, as they stood face to face for the combat, the illusion vanished, and the neophyte lost nothing by the contrast.

Each was armed with a sword and buckler. The bucklers were of the same size and pattern, being of finest steel; round in form; and not more than five palms in diameter. The swords were of very near the same length, but Bayard's was much the heaviest. In fact, he had no sword, he dared to trust, so light as Florian's; but he had offered the latter his choice from a score of good weapons, so there could be no complaint on this ground.

As the word was given for the advance, Florian's eye caught the flutter of a female's mantle in a grove of ash trees upon the summit of the bank, and he felt sure that Electa was there to watch the conflict. So, too, he caught the expression upon Timon's face, and he was resolved that the evil desire therein manifest should not be gratified if he could possibly prevent it.

The two swords were crossed with a sharp clang, and for some moments the combatants stood, each bearing upon the weapon of the other. Florian had fixed his gaze upon Bayard's eye, and there he kept it, knowing that while he read the glance of that eye aright, he could not be at fault touching the direction of the opposing blade. A short time thus, and then the swords flew apart, and flashed fiercely in the sunlight, now clashing blade against blade, and anon ringing blows upon the bucklers.

Gradually the confident look departed from Bayard's face, and an expression of deep concern took its place. He became more guarded in his play, and seemed anxious to gain advantage as quickly as possible. It was wonderful to behold the flashing and the clashing of those two swords, and yet no blood delivered upon the body. The spectators gazed with almost breathless interest, now sure that one was to be pierced, and now the other. Such use of swords they had never seen before. They had known that their leader was by far the best swordsman they had ever seen, and they had expected to see the youth go quickly down before him. In short, such had been their earnest desire; for they wished not that a stranger should come and strip the laurel from the brow of their renowned chieftain.

And Bayard never would have consented to stand in that place, but for the artful insinuation of his lieutenant:

"Let not the youthful adventurer gain place in our band," Timon had said; "if he does, who shall answer for the fickleness of Electa. Not I, my master—not I!"

And at these words Bayard's eyes had been suddenly opened to the danger of losing Electa's love, and he had resolved that he would himself stand

against the handsome youth. And this thought nerved his arm as he fought; but not his alone, for a hundred thoughts were firing the soul of his antagonist. At length, when they had exhausted the whole catalogue of blows and thrusts, and guards, and parries, set down by the masters of the weapon, Florian lowered his buckler at the moment when Bayard's sword was descending, and moved back just half a pace. The point of the descending weapon touched the surface of the depressed buckler near the centre, and on the instant, with a movement like lightning in speed, and like a thunder-clap in power, the youth struck his opponent's blade near the guard, snapping it in twain as though it had been a thing of clay. It must have been a powerful blow, for the hilt was almost forced from Bayard's grasp.

From a dozen swords brought forth by his armourer, the chieftain selected another, and the conflict was renewed.

"Ye gods! Dardinel," exclaimed our old philosopher, again touching his companion's elbow, "I did not think I should live to see this. Twice already hath the youth spared our chieftain. Have you marked it?"

"I saw it," replied Dardinel.

And others had seen it; but Bayard himself did not seem to have noticed it. He was becoming desperate, and was evidently watching for an opportunity to give his opponent a finishing blow. And finally he fancied he saw the chance. Thrice had he observed a peculiar movement of the youth's buckler, and he resolved that when it came again he would make a thrust, that should bring his antagonist to the ground. Florian caught the new light in his eyes, and quickly divining the meaning thereof, he laid his guard accordingly. Those movements which Bayard had noticed, had been made on purpose to lure him into a trap; and he fell into it. He made a most desperate lunge, fully expecting that his opponent's blade was raised for a downward stroke; but instead thereof the youth sprang nimbly upon one side, and with all his power he struck the opposing blade very near to the hilt, wrenching it from the bandit's grasp, and sending it ringing against a rock many yards away.

Had it been Bayard who had done this thing, the air would have been rent by the shouts of the excited spectators; but they dared not offer their plaudits now, though it was plain to be seen that many a brave heart was beating with love and reverence for the bold and gallant youth.

At this point Timon rushed down from his elevated seat, and offered to his commander a sword, which he had taken from one of those who sat near him. It was a two-handed sword, straight and double-edged, and, if wielded by a strong arm, almost irresistible.

"Tut! tut!" said Florian, with a smile. "You surely would not load your master with that weapon?"

"How now, boy?" retorted the lieutenant, fiercely. "Do you know the temper of this blade?—or, do you fear it?"

"Surely, I should not fear it, good Timon. It is an uncouth thing, and he would make a sorry figure who thought to use it single-handed."

"How? Will let me try it?"

"With all my heart."

"And you'll stand against me—I with this weapon, and you with your own?"

"Most willingly."

"Then, come on! Sir Bayard, I claim your place!"

#### CHAPTER VI.

THERE was a general movement among the banditti at this unlooked-for turn in affairs. Timon was held to be one of their best men, and in other years, ere the frost had touched his raven hair, not a man in all the band could stand before him. Was it fair that he should come in now, fresh and strong, and oppose one who had sustained such wondrous labour? Their doughty chieftain was well nigh exhausted, and it could not be that his more youthful opponent had reached this stage, without the loss of his strength and vigour.

Bayard was evidently opposed to the plan, and would have spoken to that effect, had not his lieutenant whispered something into his ear. Florian was standing so near that he heard the sound of the man's voice, and he plainly distinguished the name of Electa. The effect upon the chieftain was magical. He moved back, and folded his arms upon his breast.

"Sir Florian," he said, "if you see fit to accept the challenge of Timon, it is no business of mine. I will finish the combat, or I will give way to him, as you may elect."

"I am here upon trial," returned our hero, proudly, "and I shrink not from the ordeal. Twice have I disarmed you, and now another comes forth to claim

your place. You will acknowledge that thus far, I have maintained my ground?"

"Aye," answered Bayard; "and you have done it right nobly, too."

"Then let Timon have the privilege he seeks. But he must use the sword he hath now elected."

"That is fair," said the chief.

"Oh," exclaimed the lieutenant, "I advise you to have no anxiety on that score, my young friend. I have used a sword like unto it ere this, and I know its balance right well."

The spectators moved back to their seats, seemingly satisfied that the trial should proceed in the new channel thus opened; and Florian, as he cast his eyes around over the dark faces, saw that the tide of sympathy had turned in his behalf. And he saw one thing more. Up in the ash grove he not only beheld the flutter of a silken mantle, but he caught sight of Electa's lovely face as Corinna drew her back from the verge of the bank.

Tough and hard wore the thews and sinews of Timon's brawny arms, and massive were the proportions of his breast and shoulders. He grasped the heavy sword as lightly as though it had been a reed, and as he gave the ponderous blade a preliminary flourish in the air, he seemed to fancy his work well nigh done. He had in part, placed high dependence upon his own prowess; but he had relied more upon the fatigue which he supposed must have resulted to the youth, from the fierce labour he had already undergone; and that there might be no time for recuperation, he sounded the note of onset, as soon as the chieftain had got out of the way.

Twice had Bayard hesitated, as though he would turn back and resume the place he had left; but he had gone too far now to recall his decision, and he was content to see how his lieutenant would come out. Florian was in no mood for sparing his present opponent, and no sooner had their weapons crossed, than he commenced a series of movements that quite bewildered the bandit, and, in less time than it has taken to pen the fact, the huge sword was wrenched from Timon's grasp, and hurled upon the ground at his feet.

And now, no longer restrained by respect for their commander, the robbers awoke the air with their bravos, at the same time clapping lustily. Frantic with rage, Timon stooped and picked up his sword, and sprang again to the combat as quickly as possible.

"Surely, Dardinel," said the philosopher, "our lieutenant hath lost his senses. He is blind."

"And a fool to boot," responded Dardinel.

Moving gracefully and lightly hither and thither, sweeping his trenchant blade in so many curves and angles, that his opponent could take no possible account of its inclination, Florian continued the combat. He saw very plainly where Timon had made his mistake.

The lieutenant had fancied that the weight of the huge sword, wielded by his stout arm, would break down any and every guard of the light Damascus blade; and he had commenced his work in utter defiance of the nicer rules of the sword exercise; but he was to find that the blade he had held so lightly was a wizard thing, the guard of which he could no more break than he could break a ray of sunshine.

"Timon, I touch thee upon the left breast."

So spake the youth, and with the next movement he bore away the ponderous blade upon his buckler, at the same time pressing his own point upon his opponent's bosom, whereupon the valley rang again with the plaudits of the entranced beholders.

"Timon, I greet thee with my point at your throat!" And, as good as his word, at the very next pass our hero actually touched the lieutenant's bare throat.

At this point, and while the air was ringing with the shouts of the spectators, Timon forgot himself entirely. Borne away by his rage and mortification, he cast his buckler from his arm, and grasped his heavy-hilted sword with both hands, intending, by one fell blow, to split the youthful adventurer's head in twain; for it evidently appeared to him that nothing could stay such a stroke. But he was as wild in his calculation as he had been in his behaviour. With a glance which never failed him, Florian determined the direction and the force of the coming blow, and by adroitly turning his buckler, and depressing it as the ponderous blow descended, he caught the stroke and turned it harmlessly away; and then, as the foolish man, impelled by the impetus of his own swoop, pitched forward, the youth dealt him a blow upon the side of the head, with the pommel of his sword, that felled him senseless to the earth.

And then, while two men came to lift the fallen bandit and bear him away, Bayard, moved by a generous impulse, sprang down into the vale and took the hero by the hand.

"Sir Florian," he said, "you have borne the test right royally, and I hail thee as a fit leader of a section of our gallant band."



Then turning to those who had been sitting upon the banks, he continued:

"What say you, my brave men? Shall Florian be admitted as a lieutenant in our legion?"

And the answering shout that went up from three-score men gave proof to our adventurer, that he not only held the office, but the hearts of the men he was to lead.

Within an hour from that time, Timon, of his own accord, came to Florian and extended his hand.

"I confess," he said, "that I liked not the idea of sharing my command with a new-comer, and had it been in my power, I would have procured your defeat. But fate has decided against me, and in your favour. You are now equal with me in rank, and so let us from this time be friends."

Florian took the proffered hand and echoed the desire for friendship between them; but when he looked into those lurid eyes, and marked the deepening of the corrugations about the eyes and corners of the mouth, he knew that the heart of the man was cold and false; and he still said within himself, "This man have I to fear!"

"And now," cried the chieftain, "this night shall be given to joy and festivity, in honour of the occasion; and on the morrow we will think of work. We have been idle long enough; and our larder needs replenishing."

As the shades of night came on the robber band repaired to the great cavern, where a table had been laid of dimensions sufficient to give room for all, and where, after meat, the richest wines of Sicily flowed in abundance. Never in the habit of drinking much wine, Florian watched his opportunity, and poured out most of that which was supplied to his cup upon the floor of the cavern. One after another of the crew sank upon the stones as the night advanced, until finally, at a word from the chieftain, those who were sober picked up their drunken companions, and bore them away.

"This is a rare occurrence," said Bayard, as he and our hero were left alone together. "You will not find our men given to much drink when on duty; but for this occasion it will answer. I am glad that you have so strong a head. Poor Timon was among the first to sink beneath the spell; but he will come out right in the morning, and I'll warrant you he will not touch wine again for a month."

A short pause, and then the chieftain continued: "The impression which you have made upon our men is most favourable, and now they will look to see you carry out your faith in deeds. There is in Syracuse at this present time an embassy from Constantinople."

"Ay," added Florian, bitterly; "and it proposes to return laden with gold most wrongfully taken from our people. The taxes of the past year the officers of Tiberius are gathering into their coffers."

"And you know how they work?"

"Yes."

"How would it please you to relieve the proud emperor's minions of their ill-gotten store?"

"It would please me well."

"Then," said Bayard, "into your hands I give the work, and on the morrow you can commence to lay your plans. Remember, the task is entirely upon your shoulders, and when you know what force you will require, you have but to command it. If you succeed in this, your hold upon the confidence of our men is fixed."

And so the new-made bandit was to go to work. But he did not shrink from it. This embassy, which he was to take in hand, consisted of several high officers of the Byzantine court; and they had come to bear away to the Orient capital the taxes which had been assessed since the conqueror Belisarius had seized Sicily for his imperial master, Justinian. And since that time these taxes had not only been levied for tribute to the emperor, but the king, or Patrician, who ruled in Syracuse, had been sent from Constantinople. No, no—it would not be hard for the youth to seize upon that treasure. Every blow he could strike against the power that enslaved Sicily, he would strike with all his heart.

Florian retired to his chamber, and threw himself upon his couch; but he could not sleep. The events of the day had been so startling, and the promise of the future was so wild and varied, that he could only lie down and allow his fancies to run riot in his busy brain. He had lain thus, until he had become uneasy; and he was thinking of arising and walking forth into the fresh air, when a light, stealthy foot-fall arrested his attention. His first thought was of Timon, and he would have reached for his sword; but ere he had moved from his place of rest, his name was pronounced by a voice which was far from being masculine.

"Who is there?" he demanded, in a whisper.

"It is Corinna."

Florian quickly arose, and went to the entrance of his chamber, where, by the dim rays of the lamp that

hung in the main cavern, he distinguished the outlines of a female form.

"Is it Corinna?"

"Yes. Will you follow me, and make no noise?"

Take your sandals in your hand."

"But wherefore is this?"

"Will you not trust Corinna?"

"Yes—with my life."

"Then follow me, and speak no word until I bid you; and beware, also, that you make no false step."

Without farther hesitation or question, our hero caught up his sandals, and stepped lightly out from the chamber. Corinna, when she saw that he was ready, took her way towards the mouth of the cavern, and beneath the shadow of a stout ash that grew close by the portal, she stopped and spoke:

"Sir Florian, I think you are a man of honour. If I did not firmly believe you so to be, I would sooner tear out my heart and give it as a prey to the wild beasts of the mountains than do what I have proposed."

She reached forth her hand as she spoke, as though his taking it would give token of assent to her declaration. But he was not content with that alone. He gave her his hand; and he said, in tones which bore the impress of truth from their solemn earnestness:

"I would have given my life rather than betray the robber chieftain, when I truly thought him in danger. If I would do that for him, what would I not do ere I could betray a woman who had trusted me?"

"It is enough. Since the moment when I first looked into your fair and winsome face I have held you to be a true and honourable man; and as such I shall trust you; and another must trust you, too. Hark!"

As the woman uttered this exclamation, she caught Florian by the arm, and drew him back against the tree, and in a moment more he heard a heavy, irregular footfall in the cavern.

"It is Timon!" she whispered.

Hardly had the words escaped from her lips when the voice of the lieutenant was heard calling her name. His utterance was thick, and he staggered to and fro, vainly reaching out with his hands for something to support his uncertain steps.

"He is calling me now," the woman said; "and I am sure that when he finds me he will inquire for you. You must return to your chamber."

"But why should he call for you?" asked Florian.

"Are you supposed to keep watch through the night?"

"On such nights as this I am. When those who should watch are stupefied with strong drink, it is expected that the women will keep watch over the cavern. Thalia watched last, and it is my turn now—ha! He is coming this way. When he comes out, you must step in, and make haste to your chamber. But do not sleep. I shall call you—"

Before she could finish the sentence, Timon had come out from the cavern, and staggering up against the portal he called again for Corinna. There was evidently some absorbing idea, or impression, that had aroused his instinct and led him forth upon an errand of investigation. Presently he made a lurch away from his pillar of support, and while trying to regain his equilibrium, Florian went into the cavern, and made all possible haste to his chamber, where he sat down upon the edge of his couch, wondering what the end was to be.

But he had not to wonder a great while; for ere many minutes he heard footsteps approaching, and he could distinguish the voice of Timon, in thick, drunken accents, demanding to know if Florian were safe in his bed. Upon this he cast himself upon his cot, and drew the coverlet upon his shoulders.

"This is his chamber, sir," said Corinna.

"Hold your lamp, and let me see."

Florian's eyes were closed; but he could feel that the light had been cast upon him; and directly afterwards he felt a heavy, plunging hand upon his leg. It would not be natural for any man to sleep under such circumstances, so our hero leaped from his couch and caught up his sword:

"How now? Who dares intrude upon me thus? Ha! Is it thou, Timon? Ye gods! have ye not had enough at my hands?"

"Hold, good sir!—In mercy's name hold! I—I—did not—No, no,—I don't want you—"

"Will you tell me what you do want?" demanded the youth, as Timon swayed to and fro, vainly endeavouring to articulate distinctly.

"Only to know that you were provided for," answered the lieutenant, stumbling over his words in a manner which we will not attempt to transcribe. "I meant it all right, I assure you, Corinna is a careless—"

At this point Timon lost his balance, and fell. Florian lifted him to his feet, and as he seemed now completely stupefied, Corinna requested the youth to

bear him to his sleeping apartment. On the way, the drunken man essayed to speak several times, but he was too far gone for intelligible utterance; and when he had finally been deposited upon his couch, it was very evident that he would remain there until morning, for he sank at once into a lethargic slumber, his heavy breathing giving token that his senses were completely overcome.

"It was as I thought," said Corinna, when they reached the main cavern. "He commenced the night's revel with fears of yourself; and when he had concluded, those fears were uppermost among his confused ideas. The impression that you would seek to speak with Electa was so strong that it fairly brought him out of his stupor for a season. But he will not come forth again."

"Shall I return to my chamber?" asked Florian, as the woman stopped and bent her ear towards the floor.

"No," she replied. "Electa is waiting, and we must not disappoint her. She may be alarmed if we delay longer."

"Electa!—Waiting!" repeated the youth, grasping Corinna's arm.

"Aye. Did you not suspect as much?"

"I knew not what to suspect. There was a hope—a wild, passionate hope—that I might see her. Oh! Corinna, you need not fear to trust me in this. If you would tear out your heart, and give it as a prey to the wild beasts, ere you would betray that gentle being into the influence of evil, believe me when I solemnly declare before heaven, that I would give my body to be burned, praying that the ashes thereof might be scattered to the four winds of heaven, so that no more remembrance be had of me among men for ever, ere I would knowingly or willingly bring even the shadow of harm to her!"

Corinna gazed up into the radiant face of the speaker, and after a pause she said:

"I believe you. And now listen to my caution. Be on your guard, and allow not the thought for a moment to escape you that danger surrounds you on every hand—danger to you, and danger to Electa! Come!"

At the mouth of the cavern Florian stopped, and put on his sandals, after which he arose, and followed his guide out into the open air.

(To be continued.)

## SIR ALVICK.

### CHAPTER XL.

SIR ALVICK had recognized the eyes and the voice of the woman whom he had so basely injured, though he had failed to see the fair complexion of Aspa Jarles under the deep dye with which her face was stained.

"It is Aspa," he mentally exclaimed; and feeling faint and ill, he sat down, pale and trembling.

Old Jarles, whose eyes blazed with joy and triumph, filled a goblet with wine, and mockingly bowed, as he presented it to the baronet, saying in his croaking voice:

"You are slightly agitated, you know—better drink—nothing like wine—"

"You are a fool," whispered his irreverent grandson, taking the wine from him. "Would you give him strength to resist when we have him flat on his back, eh?"

Thereupon Mr. Wharrie glided about rapidly, and in an inconceivably short time had a table before the baronet, a pen in his shaking fingers, ink, and paper ready, and said:

"Sign, or, by heaven, I'll have you in Ulster-borough gaol before daylight! Hark! Varily will be glad to be let loose at you on the charge of having murdered the marquis."

The baronet, wholly unnerved, and scarce knowing what he did, signed his name to the acknowledgment we have mentioned, and then stared vacantly at Aspa Jarles.

"Hum!" muttered Mr. Wharrie, eyeing the signature very critically. "Hand a little shaky—why I had a couple of disinterested witnesses now. Don't think he will dare to deny it, though."

He secured the parchment in his bosom; but detecting the glitter of a seal-ring upon the baronet's finger, immediately unfolded the parchment, produced a piece of wax, heated it by the flame of the lamp, smeared some of it upon the parchment, and grasping the baronet's hand, forced the seal upon the wax, Sir Alvick making no resistance whatever.

Sir Alvick's brain was in a whirl of dismay and terror. He recognized the terrible fact that he was at the mercy of Mr. Wharrie, Mr. Jarles, and Lady Aspa. He saw no escape; he was as powerless in expedient as in body. He trembled, and his old horror, the paroxysm of guilt came upon him, even

as Mr. Wharfe heated the wax by the flame of the lamp.

Mr. Wharfe imagined that the terror of the baronet was killing him, and was about to rob himself of easy possession of the baronetcy, and he did not, therefore, even say:

"By your leave, Sir Alvick," when he hurriedly affixed the seal of the baronet to the parchment.

But Sir Alvick was in the fearful grasp of his mental and physical infirmity for the fifth time since the setting of the sun, and this last attack was fiercer and more tenacious than any that had preceded it.

But for his painful gasping, those who gazed in wonder upon him, would have said he was dead. His face, his colour, was that of a corpse. He was ghastly, rigid, livid, terrible in his pallid agony.

"It won't do for him to die in our presence," said Mr. Jarles, dashing the goblet of wine into the baronet's face. "Egad! our little plot would be spoiled."

The shock restored the baronet to his faculties. Yet they came back very slowly and painfully.

He drank ravenously the wine Mr. Wharfe placed at his lips, and sighed deeply, as he said:

"It is past! I thought I was in torment. Oh, how I have suffered! Give me water."

"Here is water, Sir Alvick," said Mr. Wharfe, gleefully; he was so very glad that the baronet had not died just there and then.

The baronet drank deeply, and his old harshness of face came back so fiercely that Mr. Wharfe rejoiced that he had already obtained the wished-for signature.

"I understand now," said Sir Alvick, harshly. "I am the beast in the net. Very well; what are you going to do with me?"

"Behave in the most generous and filial manner, my dear father. I think I may venture upon calling you father, eh?" replied Mr. Wharfe.

Sir Alvick scowled, but made no reply. He was wondering why Aspa, his wife, averted her face and remained so silent. He had expected that she would be erect and jubilant, fierce and taunting, exultant and mocking. But she was not. She reclined upon the bed, with her face turned from him. She seemed to be weeping, and anything but triumphant.

"We are very just, and we intend to be very fair with you, Sir Alvick," continued Mr. Wharfe, deliberately. "It is not necessary that any one should know, but ourselves, that Aspa Jarles is living. Your free and continued recognition of the validity of your marriage with Aspa Jarles, and acknowledgment that I am your son by that marriage, will make it unnecessary for us to declare that Aspa Jarles lives; that you are amenable to the charge of bigamy. Lady Matilda may continue unmolested as Lady Ulster. There need be no scandal, for no one else claims to be your son."

"You forget Hugh De Lisle," said the baronet, beginning to rally.

"No, I do not forget Hugh De Lisle. I intend to have him shot before noon. Hark Varly, from some foolish military code of honour, wishes to befriend him. Hark Varly is certain that Hark Varly is Edward Charles Fitz Osborn. I shall have Hark Varly by the ears before daylight, mark that," said Mr. Wharfe, determinedly. "Hark Varly is a rascal in some things, but he prides himself on being a soldier and a man of military honour—whatever that is," sneered Mr. Wharfe, maliciously.

"You believe Hugh De Lisle to be what you claim to be?" remarked Sir Alvick.

"Perhaps I do," retorted Mr. Wharfe, coolly. "I know he cannot prove that he is what I claim to be. I have seen Madame Doon since Hugh De Lisle saw her in France, and Madame Doon is my witness now—not his; nor do I intend that he shall have a chance to prove that he is what I claim to be."

"You agree not to molest Lord Peter's title?"

Mr. Wharfe, before replying, exchanged a glance with Mr. Jarles. That worthy and open-hearted gentleman nodded, and Mr. Wharfe replied:

"We agree to let Major Hark Varly fight his own battles, and without our support he will be powerless."

"He boasted of the possession of a certain secret writing executed by the late marquis, and duly witnessed," said the baronet.

"He does not possess it. He has a copy. We have the original."

"Then such a paper does really exist?"

"Certainly. Here it is," replied Mr. Wharfe, producing a much-faded and wrinkled document, and holding it near the eyes of the baronet.

Sir Alvick recognized the writing of the unfortunate marquis with a very perceptible shudder. He remembered that his cowardly blow had made cold and lifeless for ever the hand that had traced those lines.

He read the names of the four attestors. He had

known them all. Two were dead, but two still lived. He had seen their signatures often, and he believed those before him were genuine.

"If you intend to let Hark Varly fight his own battles," he said, as Mr. Wharfe returned the papers to his wallet, "why not permit me to retain possession of this writing, or destroy it?"

"You shall do as you please with it, Sir Alvick, when I am legally established as your son and heir," replied Mr. Wharfe.

"You will not be long above ground to enjoy your triumphs," thought the baronet, as he glared at the subtle attorney. "I know very well why you desire to retain the manuscript. The heir or possessor of Ulster succeeds to the Marquisate of Galmount in case there be no direct heirs. Once established as a legitimate heir of Ulster, you will endeavour to grasp the marquisate."

He turned to Aspa Jarles, and said, curtly: "And you, Lady Aspa, what do you receive for being silent and unknown in this?"

"Privilege to remain unknown, and nothing more," Sir Alvick replied Mr. Wharfe, quickly. "If she does not move at our will, she will be arrested for bigamy."

"Ah, so she, too, has married again!" exclaimed the baronet. "It is a pity, Lady Aspa—you see I accord to you the title—it is a pity you did not come to me before you went to these very honourable gentlemen?—I am confident from your actions that you are unwillingly here. Is it not so?"

"I have hoped for years, Sir Alvick, that you and I should never meet again on earth," replied the happy lady.

"And so far as I am concerned," said the baronet, "you might have extended your hope of never meeting me in the world hereafter, I assure you. It is a pity that we could not have met and arranged our youthful haste to suit ourselves. May I ask the name of your husband, if he lives? Ross Chaffton, I suppose."

"Oh, that is our secret, Sir Alvick," put in Mr. Wharfe. "If you attempt to molest the lady in her relations, be assured that you will harm yourself. Everybody, except our select party, believes Aspa Jarles died years ago, and it will do no good to restore her to life outside of this room. Let Aspa Jarles be believed to be dead."

"Does she desire that to be believed?" asked the baronet.

"It does not matter whether she desires it or not," replied Mr. Wharfe, sharply. "We desire it."

"I said there was a weak place in the line and front of this attack upon me," thought the baronet.

"I see where it is now, when it is too late for me to take advantage of it. Aspa Jarles has been forced to aid in the conspiracy. I thought she was the head and heart of it. I see that it is not she of her own free will. I thought she was a mercenary, vindictive woman. I was wrong. I cannot believe that this wretch of an attorney is her son."

"Aspa," asked Sir Alvick, aloud, "is this gentleman your son?"

"Thank heaven he is not," replied Aspa Jarles, with a face of disgust.

"No more of this," angrily exclaimed Mr. Wharfe. "If necessary, you are to swear that I am your son. Think of your beloved third husband and the two noble lads, and all that. But I have no fear that you can forget them."

"Forget them!" moaned the unhappy lady, as she sank back upon her pillow. "Ah, but for the disgrace and grief to them, Hassan Wharfe, I would swear everywhere that you are a vile impostor."

Mr. Wharfe showed his teeth in a grin of malicious triumph. He knew very well that he had his heel upon the heart of the wife and mother.

"Come, Sir Alvick," he said. "We must now pay a visit to Major Hark Varly. Daddy Amos, we leave you to guard Lady Aspa."

"Lock the door, Hassie, and take the key with you, if you think she can overpower me," replied old Jarles, grinning and brandishing his powerful fists.

"There isn't any danger that she will become forgetful of those two noble lads, Neddie and Harry. But lock the door and take the key with you, Hassie."

It was very evident that old Jarles was nearly drunk, and Mr. Wharfe followed the old man's advice, not because he feared that Aspa Jarles would attempt to escape, for he believed that he held her heart in his hand, knowing as he did her devoted love for the children of Lord Morton, and her fear of disgrace.

But he feared someone might enter the room and see more than he wished to be seen.

He and Sir Alvick left the room; he carefully locking the door, and taking the key with him.

Old Jarles at once began a volley of coarse abuse levelled at his unhappy daughter, but she made no reply. Indeed, she was afraid to do so, for she

knew his brutal nature, saw that he was heated with wine, and inclined to strike her.

"Clementia is a good and loving child to me," he said, after a tirade of abuse. "You are not—you are too proud, eh? You won't even speak to me. You are going to sleep, are you? Well, go to sleep and dream of me. I ought to beat you, I ought. I think a good beating would do you good. If it wasn't so much trouble I'd give it to you now. I think I will."

He tried to rise, and Aspa trembled for fear of his violence, but fortunately for her he was unable to keep his feet, and after several ineffectual attempts to stand erect, he sank back into his chair, mumbled a curse or two, and became senseless in a drunken stupor.

She gazed steadily at him for a few moments and then arose from the bed. The slight noise she made in getting up aroused old Jarles. He opened his eyes, stared at her and growled out:

"Now then! Go back to bed or I will knock you down."

"You asked for wine."

"Did I? Pour it out then. Fill it to the brim," and then old Jarles sank into a stupor again.

Lady Aspa had resolved to try to escape from that room; from that house; from the power of Jarles and his confederates. It was the first opportunity she had had to escape, since, overwhelmed by the terror of exposure, she had placed herself in their power.

To resolve to escape had been maturing in her mind from the moment when, in London, the enormity of the audacious plot had been revealed to her. In any event she saw only misery before her. Her enemies would always endeavour to use their power against her. They might not reveal to Lord Morton her shame, but they would always be thrusting themselves in her way, and make her life a life of dread and torment.

She resolved to escape; to return to Morton Hall; to embrace her children once more, and then fly from England for ever. But before she would fly, she would write out a full confession for the eye of Lord Henry, that he might know she was not so base as others might say she was.

But all was chaos in her mind as regards what she should do after escaping. To escape was the first thing to be done, and as Hassan Wharfe might return at any moment, it was imperative that she should do so instantly.

She hurried to the windows, but found escape from the room there impossible. She examined the lock, and discovered that it could be taken off by taking out the screws. With a knife she selected from those upon the table she soon removed the lock, and opened the door.

She glanced at old Jarles and saw he was senseless. She stepped out into the hall, which was intensely dark, and wholly unknown to her. She groped on blindly, not knowing whither she was going; her only hope being that she might escape from the house.

She knew that a fierce storm was raging without, and had been for hours, but she cared not for that so that she could escape from old Jarles and his grandson, Hassan Wharfe.

The gleaming of light beneath a door suddenly attracted her attention. She was almost opposite the door when she saw it, and she instantly halted, mentally exclaiming:

"Great heavens! it may be that Hassan Wharfe and Sir Alvick are in that room!"

She was about to turn and hasten away, when the door was opened, and a gentleman stepped from the room into the hall, carrying a lamp.

"Ah!" thought Lady Aspa, as her eyes met those of this gentleman, who was not three paces from her. "It is Lord Henry!" and she sank down in a swoon at his feet.

The nobleman, who had not recognized her, nor, indeed, that she was a woman, was greatly startled by the circumstance. First, he was surprised at finding a person so near his door, just as he had opened it, prompted by a mysterious impulse to look into the hall before he slept.

He had been sitting alone ever since Hugh de Lisle was removed from the room, reflecting upon the matter, and resolving to delay his journey until he had aided the young man as far as he could, and regretting that he had not been more determined in his defence; when, after more than half an hour of troubled thought, a strange impulse to look forth into the hall caused him to snatch up his lamp, and open the door, which had been replaced upon its hinges.

He had had no suspicion that anyone was near his room, and the presence of Lady Aspa was a surprise.

He was still more surprised when she sank at his feet, apparently lifeless.

"This is very strange," he said, as he held the



lamp near the disguised face and form. "Who is this man and what is he doing here?"

He hurried back into his room, placed the lamp upon the table, and returning into the hall, lifted the faninate form and placed it upon his bed, as yet with no suspicion that it was the form of a woman.

Saturating a handkerchief with brandy, he began to bathe and chafe Lady Aspa's brow and temples, and had done so for a moment before he noticed the dark skin of the unconscious lady was rapidly becoming very white.

"Ah!" exclaimed Lord Morton, staring at the discoloured face and then at the stained handkerchief, "what does this mean?"

He again snatched up the lamp, and examined closely the features of this mysterious patient.

The spirits with which he had chafed and bathed the brow and temples had removed the dye, but not sufficiently to permit him to recognize his wife.

Perhaps had he had the slightest suspicion that Lady Aspa, or as she was enshrined in his heart, Lady Constance, was before him, he might have recognized her, despite her garb, her closely-cut hair, and her stained features.

"As I live!" cried the earl, starting back, "I believe it is a woman in disguise. But man or woman, he or she must be restored to consciousness at once."

He filled a wine-glass with brandy, and lifting the head of the unconscious lady, endeavoured to force some of the liquor between her lips.

The good admiral had never had any practice in administering restoratives under such circumstances, and was awkward, yet he succeeded, and Lady Aspa opened her eyes, again recognized the beloved face bending over her, and exclaimed:

"Lord Henry! Lord Henry! Forgive me!"

"Good heavens!" cried the amazed nobleman, as he gazed into her eyes. "It is Lady Constance! It is my wife!"

(To be continued.)

## FACETIÆ.

NOT HALF FLY TO IT.—Stubbleton, displaying his ignorance, as usual, cannot think why Mercury was appointed messenger to the gods. He must have been a cripple, you see, if he was "winged."—*Fun.*

WHAT A BORE!

The bother of breech-loaders.

DISAPPOINTED SPORTSMAN: "Here's a go! Come out for a day's shooting, and these cartridges are number twelve and my gun's number ten!"—*Fun.*

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE.—SAUCE FOR THE GANDER.—"A BUTCHER has been fined 20*l.* at Worcester, or three months' imprisonment, for having in his possession the carcass of a cow unfit for human food."—*Sunday Times.* And quite right, too. Now, we know a speculative builder who has in his possession more than one "carcass" totally unfit for human habitation—what should be done with him?—*Fun.*

THE NEW MAINE LIQUOR LAW.—The old Maine Liquor Law clapped the muzzle on the mouths of men with the ridiculous idea of preventing their drinking when they were dry. The new Maine Liquor Law muzzles the dogs with the even more insane notion of preventing their drinking during July and August, when their thirst is most intense.—*Fun.*

LATEST FROM SCOTLAND-YARD.—Sir Richard Mayne has issued orders to the police employed about Woolwich, Deptford, and Plumstead Marshes, to destroy all mosquitoes found going about without muzzles. It has recently been ascertained by a profound naturalist that the mosquito frequently goes mad in the summer, owing to its imprudent practice of feeding upon human creatures. All stray flies are to be captured and taken to the nearest police-station. If not claimed within ten days they will be sold by public auction to defray expenses. The constabulary of the above-mentioned districts have been armed with cutlasses and revolvers in order that they may be thoroughly equal to their new duties.—*Fun.*

CRUELTY TO BACHELORS.

A French journal relates that, as a provocative to marriage on the part of selfish bachelors, at a *fête* held at Montreuil—

"On a décidé que le concours de tir au pistolet et à la carabine serait rigoureusement réservé aux hommes mariés."

A novel method this to drive a man to marry! Fancy a B.A., or any other British bachelor, imagining himself forced to go and get a wife, for the reason that without one he could never shoot at Wimbledon! We can't help thinking that the ladies of Montreuil would have had a better chance if the authorities had set on foot a bachelor's ball for the

benefit of those who were denied the use of bullets. In this case the young fellows who were not allowed to shoot, might have been exposed to the risk of being shot at; for there is no doubt that, if husbands are there in such demand, the bachelors at a ball would have each become a target for some of Cupid's arrows.—*Punch.*

ODD QUERIES.

What kind of mineral productions are "Vocal Gems," and have they any connection with "Sermons in Stones"?

What is an "Amateur Farm"?

Is the "Metropolitan" Railway named after the Archbishop of Canterbury?

What were the sensations of those people in India who are reported to have been "full of the Eclipse"?

What sort of a business is "the Bachelor's Kettle and Lover's Lamp Business"?

What can be cheaper than "Foreign Operas Six for a Shilling"?

Which are the "Bridal Squares"?—*Punch.*

COMING M.P.'s.—Papers and politicians are guessing at the composition of the next Parliament. Have they noticed that, amongst other orders and degrees of men, our criminals are not unlikely to be represented? for to what other class of society can those candidates belong who let out what their previous career has been, when they seek to be returned "unfettered"?—*Punch.*

GREAT ASSURANCE.

Sister: "I say, Bob, that looks like a tailor's bill!"

Bob: "Yes—just fancy! I have let that fellow dress me as he likes for the last three years, and now he has the impudence to send me his bill!"—*Punch.*

## THE RIVALS.

THREE knights of lineage knightly,

For the love of a maiden fair,  
For the light that lies in her lustrous eyes,  
And the sheen of her yellow hair,  
Have given their nights to watching,  
And their weary days to care.

The first is a gallant soldier,  
Who fiery deeds hath done,  
Who in open fight, with main and might,  
His golden spurs hath won;  
And he sighs and swears (but most he swears),  
He shall be the chosen one.

The second, a gentle scholar,  
Who dwells by Isis' shore,  
Hath learned all rhymes of the ancient times,  
And their long-forgotten lore;  
And he woos her in such verses  
As never were heard before.

But the third is a knight of worship,  
Whom vassals and hinds obey;  
Where his castle stands on his broad rich land,  
Stretching long roads away;  
And he comes and looks, though little he speaks,  
For little he has to say.

And the lady smiles on the soldier,  
Most of the rival three;  
And she listens long to the scholar's song,  
For she loves such minstrelsy;  
But nevertheless, I think I can guess,  
Which knight will the victor be.

C. A. L.

## GEMS.

TELL US not that the past, examined by cold philosophy, was no better and no loftier than the present; it is not thus seen by pure and generous eyes. Let the past perish, when it ceases to reflect on the magic mirror the beautiful romance which is its noblest reality, though perchance but the shadow of delusion.

No passion more base, nor one which seeks to hide itself, more than jealousy. It is ashamed of itself; if it appears it carries its stain and disgrace on the forehead. We do not wish to acknowledge to it ourselves, it is so ignominious; but hidden and ashamed in the character, we would be confused and disconcerted if it appeared, by which we are convinced of our bad minds and debased courage.

VALUE OF MODESTY.—Modesty is a very good quality, and one which generally accompanies true merit; it engages and captivates the minds of people; as, on the other hand, nothing is more shocking and disgusting than presumption and impudence. We cannot like a man who is always commending and speaking well of himself, and who is the hero of his own story; on the contrary, a man who endeavours to conceal his own merit, who sets that of other people in its true light, who speaks but

little of himself, and with modesty, such a man makes a favourable impression upon the understanding of his hearers, and acquires their love and esteem.

A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY.—Kingley thus declares:—"There is no pleasure that I have experienced like a child's midsummer holiday—the time, I mean, when two or three of us used to go away up the brook, and take our dinners with us, and come home at night tired, dirty, happy, scratched beyond recognition, with a greasy nose, three little trout, and one shag, the other having been used as a boat till it had gone down with all hands out of soundings. Depend upon it a man never experiences such pleasure or grief after fourteen as he does before, unless in some cases in his first love-making, when the sensation is new to him."

## STATISTICS.

STATISTICS OF THE COLONY OF NEW ZEALAND.—The returns compiled by the Registrar-General of New Zealand of the principal results of the census of that colony, taken in December, 1867, have just reached this country. The population of the colony (exclusive of the military and their families, and of the aboriginal natives) was, says the *Express*, in December, 1867, 218,637, showing an increase, as compared with 1864, of 26.99 per cent. There can be no doubt, however, from the difficulty of getting a correct account of the gold-digging population, that the actual number exceeded this. The respective populations of the chief towns were as follow:—Auckland, 11,153; New Plymouth, 2,180; Wellington, 7,460; Napier, 1,827; Nelson, 2,627; Christchurch, 6,647; Lyttelton, 2,510; Dunedin, 12,776; and Invercargill, 2,006. The military and their families numbered, officers and men, 918; women and children, 537. This number, added to the population shown by the census, gives a total of 220,092, of which 133,102 were males, and 86,990 females. The houses or dwellings in the colony numbered 54,009, against 37,996 in 1864. The estimate of aboriginal population is only approximate, 88,540 being the estimate. The total quantity of land fenced was 3,455,535 acres, as compared with 1,072,383 acres in 1864; the total quantity under crop, 676,867 acres, as compared with 382,655 in 1864. The aggregate number of live stock of all kinds (except poultry) had increased from 1,728,093 in 1858, and 5,310,062 in 1864, to 8,924,489 in 1867. Taking sheep separately, the total number in the colony had increased from 1,523,324 in 1861, and 4,937,273 in 1864, to 8,418,579 in 1867.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

ANOTHER Roman villa has been discovered in Gloucestershire—at Painswick, on the edge of the Cotswold hills.

THE recumbent statue of the late Prince Consort, by Baron Marochetti, has been brought to Frogmore, to be placed on the tomb of the Prince.

THERE is a rumour at Berlin that King George of Hanover, in the next Session of the British Parliament, will take his seat in the Lords as a Prince of the Blood Royal of England.

ARTISTIC DISCOVERIES IN FRANCE.—A portrait of Henry IV. of France, painted in the year 1599, by an artist named Jean Le Clerc, has recently been discovered in an old curiosity shop in Paris.

OLD AGE.—At a village near Liskeard are living two sisters in the enjoyment of perfect health and vigour, aged respectively 93 and 89. They recently lost two brothers, one aged 100 and the other 93.

It is said that the physicians of the Princess of Wales have advised her Royal Highness not to pass the winter in this country, as they fear a renewed attack of rheumatism during the inclement season. It is also said that, in consequence of this advice, her Royal Highness will visit her brother George I., King of Greece.

BRANDING.—The punishment of branding is to be inflicted on a sergeant of the Royal Marines, recently found guilty of falsifying books in the Pay-office. He has been turned out of his regiment to the tune of "Rogue's March," and removed, for a year's imprisonment, to Coldbath Fields, where the branding is to take place. His defalcations amounted to 49*l.*

At the Huntingdonshire Agricultural Society, recently, General Peel said he believed that any man who asks for a shilling more than is necessary to secure the efficiency of the army, and the safety of the country, is unwise, and he who asks for a shilling less is still more unwise. There is one matter for which no money can pay, and that is the honour of England.

## CONTENTS.

Page	Page
MISS ARLINGBOURGH'S	FLORIAN ... .. 90
WILL ... .. 75	SIR ALVICK ... .. 93
THE AGE OF ABRAHAM	FACTS ... .. 95
INFECTIOUS LODGINGS ... 76	THE RIVALS ... .. 95
CAUSE OF FLAVOUR IN	GENE ... .. 95
FRUIT ... .. 76	STATISTICS ... .. 95
CHARITY INSTEAD OF	MISCELLANEOUS ... .. 95
PUNY ... .. 76	
Y-LU ... .. 76	
LADY ROSELYN'S MYSTERY	MICHEL-DEVER, com-
MICHEL-DEVER ... .. 81	menced in ... .. 259
AN OLD IRISH JUDGE ... 81	LADY ROSELYN'S MYSTERY,
A FRASP OF FAT MEN	commented in ... .. 267
INTERPRETANCE ... .. 81	SIR ALVICK, commenced
A LADY'S DRESS SIXTY	66 ... .. 270
YEARS AGO ... .. 81	YU-LU, commenced in ... 285
THE FLOWER GIRL ... .. 85	FLORIAN, commenced in ... 287
SCREW ... .. 85	MISS ARLINGBOURGH'S
THE EARTHQUAKE TERM	WILL, commenced in ... 287
RESTORATION OF CHRIST-	WHO DID IT? com-
CHURCH, NEWGATE	menced in ... .. 288
STREET ... .. 88	THE FLOWER GIRL, com-
WHO DID IT? ... .. 89	menced in ... .. 288

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**W. MORAGAN.**—The coin is of no value beyond that of its weight in silver.

**A CONSTANT READER.**—You will not be legally of age until you attain the age of twenty-one, and thus must remain under the guardianship of your remaining parent.

**FRANK AND PORTY.**—The essay "G. C. J." is simply an exemplification of wasted time; "G. A. L." the lines are feeble and is every way unfitted for print.

**J. H. REDMAN.**—Lord Palmerston was an Irish peer, and not a peer of the realm; thus he had no seat in the House of Lords.

**PERCY.**—The windage of a gun, mortar, or howitzer, means the difference between the diameter of the bore, and the diameter of the shot or shell.

**ADVICE.**—Husband and wife should never disagree before friends, nor prattle abroad of mishaps at home. What passes between two people is much easier made up before than after it has become promulgated.

**R. M.**—You need do no more, and that only for your own protection from after inconvenience, than advertise your intention in the daily papers. If without fraudulent intent, a man may adopt any name he pleases.

**F. G. R.**—Your handwriting is by no means bad, still there is room for improvement; practice frequently and carefully, paying great attention to the formation of your letters; by this means you will progress rapidly.

**ELLEN CHAMBERLAIN.**—Had our fair correspondent habitually perused these columns she would have seen how frequently we have stated that no charge is made for insertions in the correspondents' page.

**MABEL.**—The word "town," in its primary sense, mean an enclosure for defence; but in the present day the word is applied to any place in which a market is held at certain fixed periods; this distinguishes a town from a village.

**AGATHA.**—It is an excellent plan to carry a pencil in the pocket, and write down any thoughts that may arise at the moment; these that come unsought for are generally the most valuable, and should be secured, because they seldom return.

**EMILY MAY.**—The inconvenience you speak of frequently arises from indigestion; be careful in your diet, take moderate open air exercise; and occasionally a little cooling medicine, and for the purpose of ablation use glycerine soap.

**OSCELIA.**—In the southern parts of Northamptonshire may still occasionally be witnessed the poetical custom of placing garlands of flowers within a coffin before it is deposited in the grave. When the corpse is that of an elderly person, the blossoms are mingled with sprigs of box and yew.

**T. MILLS.**—Cubit is an ancient measure, and the first we read of; the Ark of Noah was made and measured by cubits. The Hebrew sacred cubit was two English feet. Originally it was the distance from the elbow, bending inwards, to the extremity of the middle finger.

**FRANCIS.**—Booksellers, at first migratory, like hawkers, became known as *stationarii*, from their practice of having stalls at the corners of streets and markets; they were long subjected to various vexatious restrictions, from which they were freed in 1758.

**ARTHUR.**—Hundreds is a Danish institution, a "hundred" being a part or division of a shire, supposed to be so called from its having been composed of a hundred families, at the time the counties were originally divided by King Alfred in 897. The Hundred-Court is a Court-baron held for all the inhabitants of a hundred instead of a manor.

**ONE IN DISTRESS.**—There is no place in which you can be married in secret. If you have the ceremony performed in a parish distant from that in which you reside, it would amount to the same thing. One of the parties, however, must reside in the parish in which the ceremony is to be performed fifteen days beforehand.

**TOW HAIR.**—An excellent preparation for the hair, to render it dark, soft, and curly, may be made thus: melt a quarter of an ounce of the best white wax, in four ounces of either almond or olive oil; when nearly cold add any perfume that is preferred, such as a mixture of fifteen drops of oil of cloves, or ten drops of essence of almonds.

**EXPECTATA.**—Handwriting very good in the main, and suitable for ordinary purposes, but for the purpose of an amanuensis, you write with too much rapidity and thus do not form your letters with sufficient clearness; for such an employment accuracy of spelling and distinctness in the formation of letters are indispensable.

**ANNE.**—The origin of "St Catherine's Wheel" is said to be as follows: At the time of St Catherine's martyrdom, she is said first to have put upon an engine made of four wheels joined together, and stuck with sharp pointed spikes;

so that when the wheels were moved her body might be torn in pieces. At the first stirring of the terrible engine, the cords with which the martyr was tied, were broken sunder by the invisible power of an angel, and the engine falling in pieces, on account of the wheels being separated from one another, she was saved from that death: hence the name.

**ROLAND.**—The practice of medicine as an art dates back to the earliest time of the Egyptians; and among the ancient Greeks there were several who were well skilled in the science. The earliest medical work written in the English tongue is Andrew Bood's "Breviary of Health," published in 1547.

**STANLEY.**—Houses for the reception and entertainment of travellers are first noticed in the time of Richard II. The cognizance of that monarch was the white hart, with a gold chain; the white swan was that of Henry IV.; the blue bear that of Richard III.; hence the use of these signs by innkeepers.

**PETER.**—The term "journey-weight" is applied in the Mint to the weight of certain parcels of coin; and was probably considered formerly as the definition of a day's work. The journey of gold is 155 Troy pounds, which is coined into 701 sovereigns, or 1,402 half sovereigns. A journey of silver weighs 40 pounds Troy, and is coined into 792 crowns, or 1,584 half-crowns, or 3,960 shillings, or 7,920 pence.

**J. E. HOWER.**—The skins may be preserved by means of oak bark liquor, which you can obtain at any tan yard. Your better plan would be to place them in the hands of a bird-stuffer, who would preserve them properly, and at half the price they would cost you. Still if you desire to make the essay, the tanner of whom you purchase the oak bark liquor will instruct you how to use it.

**R. L. E.**—The person you name is an advertising quack, avoid all such as you regard your health. Had you sent him the 2s., it would have been as the first drop of blood to a leech; an appetite for additional sums. Go at once to a respectable medical practitioner, hiding nothing, and he will cure you, that is, if you have strength of mind sufficient to abide by his advice.

**R. J. C.**—1. Spring or early autumn is considered the best time of the year to make the voyage. 2. Certainly, take testimonials as to character with you, they will greatly facilitate your purposes in any colony; at all events they can do no harm, if they do no good. 3. The rate of wages is higher than in England. 4. We could advise no better colony for a healthy, willing, hard-working single man.

## MORNING AND EVENING.

Shining is the star of morning.

As a queen upon her throne.

Without any hindrance ruling

All her lovely azure zone.

Shining is the star of evening.

As a queen upon her throne.

Without any hindrance ruling

All her lovely azure throne.

Both are queens of power, beauty;

Both their splendid sceptres sway,

Yet one triumphs in the evening.

And the other in the day.

O. O.

**RAYMOND.**—The Court of High Commission was an ecclesiastical court in 1535, by which all spiritual jurisdiction was vested in the Crown. This court originally had no power to fine or imprison; but under Charles I. and Archbishop Laud it assumed enormous and illegal powers, and was one of the grievances complained of by the Parliament, by whom it was abolished in 1641.

**KERETMAN.**—If your *affiance*, after having blessed you at your partings with so many loving kisses, has suddenly discovered that to do so is "so awful," we cannot advise you otherwise than to appeal to the court of Cupid, or to take a lesson from the hero and heroine in Lover's capital song of "Bory O'More." If after this you do not take the hint you must be a very silly goose indeed.

**S. E.**—Two, the Lord Mayor of London and the Lord Mayor of York. There is also a Lord Mayor of Dublin and a Lord Provost of Edinburgh. The first Mayor of London was Henry Fitz Alwyn, in 1189. He held office for twenty-four years. The prefix of Lord, with the title Right Honourable, was granted by Edward III. in 1354. The prefix Lord to the Mayor of Dublin was first conferred on Sir Daniel Bellingham by Charles II.

**OLIVER.**—The duties of a surveyor are: to repair and keep in repair the several highways in the parish or district for which he is appointed. Before erecting direction-posts, he must obtain the consent of the vestry, or the direction of the justices in petty session assembled. He must remove accumulations of snow, or falling down of banks on the side of the highway, within twenty-four hours after notice from a justice of the peace requiring him to do so.

**ENQUIRE.**—You must have read your "Guide to the Civil Service" very carefully, or you would have seen that under the heading of each department it is stated in whom the patronage is vested. For the most part it is in the hands of the Ministry of the day; therefore, if you have no interest with ministers, you can only obtain a nomination through the interest of a member of Parliament voting with the Government.

**G. H. H.**—Your education having been neglected your better course would be to become a member of a mechanic's institution, or join some evening school. If bent on educating yourself, you cannot do better than obtain a list of Chambers's Educational Course; choosing from that excellent series, those books you most require. Would you learn French, Latin, German, or Italian, purchase "Ollendorf's System." Any of the foregoing may be obtained through any bookseller.

**MAURICE.**—Licences to persons to deal in game, are granted by justices in special sessions assembled, in the month of July in every year. A licence cannot be granted to an innkeeper, or victualler, or person licensed to sell beer by retail; nor to the owner, guard, or driver of any mail-coach, or other vehicle employed in the conveyance of the mails, nor to a carrier, or higgler, nor to persons in the employment of any of the above. The duty for a licence to deal in game is 2s.

**P. S. M.**—1. Scrape off the top crust of the warts, and then wet them with aromatic vinegar; repeat the operation every three or four days and they will quickly disappear.

2. For hard corns put a little powdered quicklime on a piece of cotton wool, or lint, and replace it night and morning; for soft corns put a little powdered chalk instead of lime, between the toes. 3. For bunions, an excellent ointment may be made with twelve grains of iodine, and half an ounce of lard or spermaceti; it should be rubbed on gently twice or thrice a day.

**MARY.**—The Hellespont is a narrow arm of the sea, between Europe on the west, Asia on the east, the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, northward, and the Aegean sea, now the Archipelago, southward; the present name is the Strait of the Dardanelles. The Hellespont took its original from Helle, daughter of Athamas, King of Thebes, who was drowned here. It is celebrated for the loves of Hero and Leander. Leander was drowned on a tempestuous night, as he attempted to swim across the Hellespont; and Hero, in despair, threw herself into the sea, 637, a.c.

**A CAT'S HILL NAILER** puts to us the following interesting questions: "Whether Calcraft turned hangman to save his life, whether he hung his father and brother first, whether he be obliged to keep to his awful work till he dies, and what county does the come from, and if so, what crime did he commit to be in such a position?" We confess our inability to answer these queries. Perhaps, however, if the "Cat's Hill Nailer" were to address a letter to the dreaded official at Her Majesty's Gaol of Newgate, he might obtain all the information he requires, with the addition of an autograph.

**NEW READER.**—To remove red pimples, take twenty grains of sulphate of copper, four ounces of rose-water, and twelve ounces of pure water; mix well together; the pimples must be first rubbed with a rough towel, and then bathed with the lotion. 2. To promote the growth of the eyelashes, slightly dip the points, but very slightly. 3. In ear ointment the prettiest and most elegant way for a young lady to wear her hair is in curls; simple water is the best thing to damp the hair with, but this should be done with moderation. 4. An engagement ring should be worn on the fourth finger of the right hand.

**ALICE.**—1. To improve the complexion, take one pound of Castile soap, one gallon of water, dissolve, then add one quart of alcohol, two drachms each of oil of rosemary and oil of lavender; mix well; bathe the face occasionally. 2. To remove all stains and discolorations of the skin, take one ounce of elder-flower distillate, and twenty grains of sulphate of zinc; mix; and rub into the affected part at night; in the morning wash it off with plenty of soap, and when the grease is completely removed, apply the following lotion; half a pint of infusion of rose petals, and thirty grains of nitric acid.

**FLORIAN.**—The burying-places of the Greeks and Romans were at a distance from their towns, and the Jews had their sepulchres in gardens and in fields. The present practice was introduced by the clergy; who pretended that the dead enjoyed peculiar privileges by being interred in consecrated ground. Several public cemeteries, planted after the manner of Père La Chaise, have of late years been opened in all parts of the kingdom. Père La Chaise derives its name from a French Jesuit, the favourite and confessor of Louis XIV.; he died in 1709, and the site of his house and grounds at Paris is now occupied by this cemetery.

**JESUS MARIAN,** nineteen (a Roman Catholic), tall, rather dark, musical, and would make a loving wife.

**SARAH,** 5 ft. 9 in., brown hair, good-looking, and a good temper. Respondent must be tall, dark, and good-looking.

**D. M. S. E.** (a professional, and a bachelor), tall, dark, good-looking, and affectionate. Respondent must have a good income.

**EDITH ROWLEY,** sixteen, medium height, auburn hair, dark eyes, good-looking, and good-tempered. Respondent must be tall and dark.

**MOSES ROSEBUD,** eighteen, medium height, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and will have a fortune when of age. Respondent must be tall, dark, good-looking, and respectable. Money no object.

**EDWARD and GEORGE.**—"Edward," twenty, dark, curly hair, and of an amiable disposition. "George," nineteen, light hair, fair, and of medium height. Both have an income of 200l. Respondents must be about nineteen, and accomplished.

**ROSE MAY,** eighteen, a tradesman's daughter, tall, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and would make a good and affectionate wife. Respondent must be about twenty-five or thirty, respectable, affectionate, fond of home, and in a good position.

**NELLIE and CONSTANCE KATE.**—"Nellie," fair, pretty, blue eyes, medium height, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, fond of home, and be in a good trade. "Constance KATE," a dark, handsome brunette, medium height, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, dark, a good tradesman, and fond of home.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**H. STANNYER** is responded to by—"P. Moore."

**POLLY** by—"H. D.," twenty, dark, tall, and handsome, with a salary of 200l.

**MAGGIE GILSON** by—"Curley," twenty, a tradesman; dark, handsome, medium height, and affectionate.

**J. W. B.** by—"Duchess," tall, fair, good-looking, amiable, and very domesticated.

**SOPHIA** by—"G. J.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 8 in., dark, and good-looking.

**NELLIE** by—"H. B.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 6 in., fair, and good-looking.

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